

# FRAKO

*Performing Arts magazine*

## DISORIENTATION: **EASTERN EUROPE**



AARHUS FESTUGE



• MEMORY DISLOCATION BODY VIOLENCE DIFFERENCE  
RETROGARDISM TRAINING DISAPPEARANCE **TUSOVKA**

# FRAKCIJA

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Every description of Eastern Europe entails at least one huge problem - models are created which should be applicable to the whole context. That the term has little if anything to do with geography is obvious from the fact that the country where this magazine is being published, Croatia, has throughout history been shifting from Southern Europe (its geographical context) into Middle Europe (its cultural context) finally to wind up in Eastern Europe (its post-Communist or pre-political context). Having begun work on this issue, we have tried to gather authors and texts under the general heading Eastern Europe - Models and Originals. We have thus fell into the trap of being something else and adopted the models usually used to explain Eastern Europe as well, as the ceaselessly recurring images of Eastern Europe's uniqueness. The war in Kosovo was the first event to affect our plans, many contributors having turned to Kosovo as the only possible topic, or feeling that certain subjects cannot be discussed while the Kosovo catastrophe is taking place, or crouching in the shelters where we were unable to reach them. The so-called Eastern Europe started to bolly yet another time and the positions of power were altered once again. In the end, we decided to use a different template for this issue: remembrance of things past (memory, Communism, great theatre masters, dissidents) and of things to come (transition into a known model, uniform market, import of techniques based on methods exported). From the material discussed, suggested, selected, rejected or reprinted we have chosen the authors and texts representing different views on the topicality of Eastern Europe, on the traces of its recent theatre past, on possible sources of individual theatre ideas, and on suggestions for discussing the abiding prejudices. This issue will neither organise nor catalogue anybody's knowledge of Eastern Europe, making a point - we hope - of the necessity of differing, that no world can reduce to a common denominator.

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# Where is the East?



DIETER JÄENICKE  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
INTERNATIONALES SOMMERTHEATER  
FESTIVAL HANNOVER

*"Those who discover only foreigners, mafia, alcohol excesses, prostitution, dilapidated psychiatrics and run-down railway station children behind the new Iron Curtain are painting a stage decoration for a big historical soap opera."*

Hans-Volkmar Findelsen

Why does a festival of contemporary theatre and dance concentrate on Eastern Europe? Are there any artistic developments, artists, minds or concepts that could be giving new impulses to the contemporary performing arts? Or is it some new considerations and motifs that play an important part?

Let's make it clear and not have any high hopes about this: in the East I can't see, at least not yet, any directions who could stimulate contemporary International Performing Arts, in a way in which Robert Legge, Bea Abbö, Jan Lauwers or Jan Fabre had done before, and we will have to wait for a while until there are to be found choreographies of the stature of Reutterweber, Meg Stuart or Alan Planell (why do they all actually come from Belgium?), Edward Lock, or Lloyd Newson. Josef Hajl could serve as an example, but he has been working in France for 20 years now. Contemporary dance requires democratic surroundings and a liberal intellectual and artistic climate - this cannot be accomplished in just a couple of years.

Why is it then that the 1999 International Summer Theatre Festival Hamburg deals with Eastern Europe? The usual table talk about the necessity of including the East into new Europe normally does not care for artistic justification, let alone the individual indulgence in the East or a diffuse bad conscience.

It is pure curiosity, fed on historical and political situations, that had driven us to look eastwards, but we stumble over the first questions. Where is the East actually? Where does it begin if Poland and the Czech Republic are pointing out quite clearly that they are not Eastern, but Central Europe, i.e. Mitteleuropa? The Iron Curtain was an arbitrary borderline drawn by ironically disposed systems and military blocks, but it certainly wasn't a culturally founded dividing line. In reality there are no recognisable historical and geographical borders that could be drawn between the East and the West. A German will find more similarities and affinities in terms of history, traditions, architecture, landscape and climate in Poland or the Czech Republic than in France or Italy. And everyone who, like me, belongs to the first post-war generation, would experience Polish countryside as if he stepped into a time machine. I remember very well my first visits to the countryside between Wrocław and Poznań in mid 80s; it was a faithful replica of a journey to my childhood in the 60s - and I wasn't prepared to go through it once again. Where is then the borderline between the East and the West, how far from or how near to one another are Würzburg and Wrocław? (Although I insist it is not to be called Boedapest)

A decade after the socialist East had lost the historic race with the West, the enthusiasm dwindled on both sides. This may be quite normal. In the meantime whole new races are taking place east of us: for the pool-position in the race for favour with the EU, NATO membership and the World Bank loans. Economic and social historian Eric J. Hobsbawm names three great break-downs in this century's European history: the two World Wars and the collapse of Communist systems, the latter being the most disastrous one and the one from which the world will not recover to soon. From that point of view curiosity is further nourished: what kind of art could be produced and how in the conditions of a disastrous social break-down?

Where is the East today? A dance and theatre festival naturally cannot answer the question of what has become of the remains of Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika and what should become of them. However, having witnessed a gigantic disaster that has been emphatically celebrated by the large part of the world, we should be interested in the present position of the theatre in the East. Which questions are being asked, which developments are to be found? A decade ago under the impact of all the changes and new liberties the Eastern theatre was for a short period of time secretly brought to the international festivals of the West - a momentary trend that in the East itself provoked much hope and even more disappointment. Are the present day stages of the East really a part of the promised New Europe?

The position of performing arts in the East today may not be and definitely is not providing any empirically correct information about the present situation concerning the disasters and conditions beyond the Iron Curtain. The productions we have seen or brought here speak neither about these disasters nor can they be a mediating function. The insight, the common message at best is: Everyone can go his/her own way. This goes for the theatre, too. Everything is not necessarily allowed, but at least there is nothing proscribed.

On our trips to Bulgaria, Georgia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Hungary, the Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and the Baltic countries we had hoped we'd find artists who we could point in the direction of merciless artistic and critical nucleus of the Western performing arts and who we could surprise our audiences with. It is instructive to examine the material and the ideas of these artists. The most interesting productions combine tradition, new techniques and contents in the most amazing ways: the Shambato Theatre Laboratory from Sofia conducts with an almost

**A German will find more similarities and affinities in terms of history, traditions, architecture, landscape and climate in Poland or the Czech Republic than in France or Italy**

scientific theatrical scrutiny investigation into old documents and customs of the Bulgarian heretics which results in a powerful, up-to-the-minute artistic statement. With a radical stroke of computer animation, Peter Jakabek brings on stage an Estonian folk dance

Boli together with his company goes unconventionally through Beckett references more or less faithfully to the original.

16. INTERNATIONALES  
**SOMMERTHEATER**  
FESTIVAL HAMBURG  
VOM 20.8. - 11.9.1999

WO IST OSTEN ?



treape, a fake wedding and a crash course in Estonian history. Russian choreographer Sasha Belyayev together with the director Henrietta Jarzovskaya employ traditional patterns and classical strong points of the Russian theatre and ballet in order to combine contemporary dance with the theatre. The young Bulgarian, Lilia Abadjieva, on the contrary, dissects Shakespeare's heretic disrespectful of the story and the original, while the Hungarian, László

The result of our investigation is encouraging: we didn't have to rely on any of the big names of the Eastern Theatre such as Nekrasov, Vassiliev, Bodin, Tofan or Purtarere, who during the changes celebrating years had been introduced to the audience with a short-term interest in the East. With all due respect to those big names, our aim was to see whether there are any new developments, new names and new structures in the East European theatre. Young in the sense of age played no part here, nor did innovative, because artists coming from a system that had been locked away for fifty years would have stood no chance. Independence should at best stand for a notion with which we can describe the quality of the artists involved. Finally we had to sort them out and postpone some of them for next year, because we couldn't take in all the artists in one festival: much-promising talents, such as the young Polish cult director Grzegorz Jajszta, the young Latvian and Lithuanian theatre and a couple of other projects simply cannot be shown before the year 2000. In some countries, such as Armenia, Albania or Belarus, we're not yet present, but we'll make up for it. The festival event that does not exhaust itself lasts as a matter of course. In the future the view eastwards will become the commonplace of artistic concern, which will not exclude either the Balkans or Caucasus.

Inclusion is the key word: the actual question to be put to the festival director is: are we interested exclusively in the best and the most innovative and masterly performances of the contemporary performing arts? (Which automatically - regardless of the globalisation - leads to stratification of their salaries to those of our own Western avantgarde). Or do we find the notion of the contemporary capable and worthy of discourse, so that in a globally accessible world it can be observed both in and out of each of its contexts? We now come to pragmatism decisions that do not segregate, i.e. exclude, the art of the so-called Third World and Eastern Europe from the Western avantgarde. In order to make it sensible and legitimate, we neither have to reach for such noble words as understanding and peace missions, nor defend the other position as Euro-restrictive. We at the Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg have under the influence of globalisation consciously chosen the other path. That is the reason why in the past one could have seen here artists from Asia, Africa and Latin America alongside with those from Europe, and why this year there are artists from Sofia, Moscow, Prague, Lubljana, Riga and Budapest and those from

Munich, London, Paris, Berlin and Hamburg. We find the discourse about the contemporary art in its context, about the non-similarity in similarity, and about the examination of the external in art and through art interesting not only for theorists and ethnologists, but also for theatregoers. Especially in a country such as Germany.

Besides we find it appropriate in a city that pronounces being open to the world as a part of its programme and that calls itself the gate to the world. Unfortunately, certain cultural policies concerning the future of this city see this differently.

The way we view the East is in no way a local or a personal whim. Festivals in Avignon, Aarhus and Antwerpen, in Berlin, Hamburg, London, Rome and Stockholm began independently and simultaneously pushing the East more resolutely into the centre of their work. The newly founded association *Theatres* creates a productive network for the future East-West exchange.

Ten years ago, the Wall fell and a new borderline was drawn straight across Europe. It carries a new name of Schengen - a protective wall just like its forerunner (except for overlooking the other side), and in the East a symbol for dashed naive hopes for a common House of Europe. At the moment, artists, theatre and festival directors from both the East and the West are starting to develop a network far ahead of the political realities of Europe - a strength that sometimes only artists are capable of.

The war in Kosovo makes the dimension of the catastrophe and its consequences brutally clear, and forces the Western media to turn their heads eastwards for a moment. War approving pacifists, the most arduous idealogists at the only ones who can still tell between right and wrong, ethirical cleansing and collateral damage - they all belong to the 1999 everyday vocabulary and they all show us to what extent the consequences of the change can make a difference.

Theatre hardly knows how to handle this - there is hardly something to be added to the continuous coverage of the events, and moral, political and philosophical judgements on all journalistic levels. While the 1999 artists with the request for assistance still refer to war in Bosnia, the war in Kosovo is dominated by headlines and discussions. Theatre is not news and the current affairs programme and psychological constellations of a Chekhovian Sunday afternoon outing in the country may seem a bit helpless and out of place. The Albanian National Theatre in Skopje, Macedonia ended

its repertoire for the time being and opened the theatre to look after the orphans - the theatre with and for the children is a part of the welfare service. Our partner in Belgrade, Centre for Cultural Decontamination, practically had to call off their work. Theatre under conditions of catastrophe in Sarajevo it took place in air-raid shelters and among the ruins even during the want days of war - about Belgrade we know little so far.

The festival will not pursue any theatrical reflections of the war in Kosovo, but reality does determine discussions, questions and platforms. The art of the East is hardly a part of the world stage, but rather an alternative stage serving as an artistic laboratory for the future.

Naturally, the Internationales Sommertheaterfestival Hamburg will not exclusively be dedicated to the East. Big companies such as La La La Human Steps from Canada, STW from Great Britain, projects from Hamburg and Kai Harada Dance Company are part of the programme. To present artists from the East and the West together at a single festival is a part of our concept. In the East-West laboratory the artists from the West and the East, from different cultural disciplines will work together. The central project of the festival is the *Weaven Bodies/Weave Culture* workshop.

The bringing about of a festival programme in which one can investigate new and unknown areas is not a one-man show. A lot of other people participated, too. We would like to thank all those who had taken part in one way or another in realisation of this festival. We would also like to express our special thanks to Nathalie Timmermans of Théâtre/Festival, Avignon, for her outstanding efforts, Sergej Priznat of *Praktoja*, Zagreb, and Lars Seeborg of Aarhus Festival for their cooperation, Chris Tatch of Intercult, Stockholm, and Nola Hennig of Hebbeltheater, Berlin, for their suggestions, Hans-Wolmar Fladelander for the joy of reading, and Mrs Rita Teepler and Mr Hubert Rinner for their great engagement and support of the Alfred Toepler Foundation without which the East European project would have never been realised.

Hamburg, June 1999

**In the future the view eastwards will become the commonplace of artistic concern, which will not exclude either the Balkans or Caucasus**

*Translated from the German by Joe Corlett*

# The Richest



LARS SEEDBERG  
SECRETARY GENERAL  
OF THE ARHUS FESTIVAL

**Programming a festival the theme of which is 10 Years After the Wall, has in effect been a rather desperate undertaking, but it has given me a wealth of artistic experiences and new friends in the world of culture with whom I hope to be able to co-operate in the future**

Eastern and Central Europe is new land to me. In a way I too have been a victim of the post-war partition of Europe. A victim of a blockage which has kept me from going to the world (or rather a number of worlds) which were just around the corner. Rather perverse, I should say...

But that was reality for me for almost 30 years, when I was travelling to just about anywhere else.

The only Eastern bloc country I knew was East Germany. Or rather, I knew East Berlin.

My first visit was in 1972, on a study tour with other students of literature from Denmark. We were mostly in West Berlin, where we were completely taken in by Schaubühne's two nights of *Arthurbiprojekt*, directed by Peter Stein and Klaus Michael Grüber. In comparison with this, the Berliner Ensemble's versions of *Svejk* and *Gählei* seemed somewhat dusty.

But what was equally important: Life around Savigny Platz in the West was undoubtedly more easy than Mittag in the East. So even

though we ate humble-pie in Friedrichstrasse Station's maze of control systems in order to reach the East to see the shows or buy the KEN edition of *Der Kapitol* at a bargain price, we hurried back home to our own world in the West, although some of us (we were all on the left; at the time) had a bad conscience about our inability to appreciate the so-called "realised" socialism in any noticeable degree.

Some of my friends who had just left the rather uncompromising part of the unorganized anti-authoritarian hedge-podge had joined the Moscow-faithful Danish Communist Party (DKP) tried all the time to see the bright side of all the misery. They didn't succeed in getting me onboard.

Gastronomy provided me to betray my class in a little dirty restaurant (which is now a splendid cafe in the museum of German history) when I was served a so-called hunter's schnitzel in a paprika sauce with rice on the side. All was served in a tin bowl with tin cutlery by a sour and crossless waitress.

The meat was poor. The sauce was inexpressibly red, yet without any taste of paprika

whatever. The rice, however, was the worst. I still wonder how anyone can turn boiled rice into porridge. Nevertheless this proletarian avant-garde restaurant in the show room city of DDR's realized socialism, Hauptstadt Berlin, had succeeded in doing so.

My DECP friends tried to fool themselves and the rest of us into believing that "the taste was all right", and that we should be ashamed of ourselves for thinking that the meal was a disaster.

This meal played a significant role in my relationship with organised socialism. For me it was simply the thin end of the wedge. That end where you deny what your senses and your reason tell you in response to the siren songs of a "good cause".

I chose the kitchens. For instance those around the Mediterranean. And I made a point of only going to the theatre in East Berlin. Particularly when Deutsches Theater, just before the fall of the Wall, became a place of worship at, among others, Heiner Müller's wrestling with his own and the divided Germany's history.

These were exciting times, but it was completely depressing to see how petty bourgeois, authoritarian and aesthetically miserable the society was.

For me the rice test was the eye opener in terms of the bankruptcy of the system - in the same way that Hemingway in a purely aesthetic manner called Manzolini "the biggest bluff in Europe," when he concluded that you can't take a man wearing a black shirt with white stars seriously.

Aesthetics as an antidote to political correctness and "double talk" might be a rather romantic thought, but for me it was essential and could be re-used when the DPP sympathisers tried to convince me that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was a necessary transition phase in Denmark also, in order to reach a higher stage of civilisation. For me dictatorship could only be a negative term, I never succeeded in turning it around for 180 degrees. I let my rice on cold.

All this is just to give you the background why I first began to contemplate going to see Eastern and Central European countries after the fall of the Wall and even then with a great delay. I didn't feel like it before. They were not locations that attracted my curiosity. It seemed too bitter beforehand.

In a way I have of course come to lump it all together. I have not had an eye for the

manners. My optics were, ironically, governed by Western propaganda's rendering of the countries behind the Iron Curtain as one monolithic, grey Inhumanity. And yet, the truth was likely that, in fact, there were great variations, various forms of successful break with the system, and of movement towards changes, which, however, were heavily opposed by the respective systems, until Poland's Solidarity movement came along.

For almost 30 years my approach to the countries behind the Iron Curtain has been through anti-authoritarian artists like

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#### TI ÅR EFTER MUSEENS FALD

Biermann and Havel. Only lately had I wished to travel to these very different countries and discovered what I have missed. My knowledge is, therefore, sporadic. Programming a festival, the theme of which is 10 Years After the Wall, has in effect been a rather desperate undertaking, but it has given me a wealth of artistic experiences and new friends in the world of culture with whom I hope to be able to collaborate in the future.

And I haven't. I, indeed, had many good meals lately in Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Russia (let alone Mitte in Berlin...)?

MILJENKO JERGOVIĆ



# Irma

In days of childhood, St. Joseph's and St. Mark's graveyards merged imperceptibly, like deciduous with evergreen woods. Vocabulary changed, with the Cyrillic replacing the Latin script, while a few steps farther, subject to the same principle of solitude and oblivion, the moss of ancient Gothic characters in the tendrils of Russian family names was fading away. Once there may have been a wall separating the Catholic and the Orthodox burial grounds, but as both have for a long time been disused and the living reconciled in oblivion and general death, a subtle, elusive shade has emerged, a resonance of linguistic variants indiscernible to a child's ear, and, in those times, of scarce interest even to the elders. We started pondering multiculturality, ecumenism and other forms of community of slighter market value, only when slaughter became imminent.

In the first row, along the main graveyard thoroughfare, where the Catholics are buried, some fifty odd yards from the entrance and the creaking cast iron gates, grass covers a tomb of white marble dappled with red capillaries. Contrary to custom and the usual crowdfest of the town's vaults, a single body lies in it. Or had lied one it has, even before World War II, been worm-eaten in that all important and pathos-free process of transforming the living, aching tissue into something else. On a smooth slab, the letters are inscribed in an ordinary font, say Arial or some even less assumptive typeface, as if the living had wanted that nothing save the bare fact about the person should attract a passer-by. About them, the living, there are no data, just the family name of the deceased was not to be found in the town's 1979 telephone directory, nor have I ever come across, in St. Joseph's graveyard or in any of the few newer Sarajevo graveyards I visited on regular if perfunctory rounds, the same family name. So, the inscription on the tomb of white marble dappled with red capillaries, some fifty odd yards from the main gate of St. Joseph's graveyard, reads:

Irma Santarčić (1886-1907)

At the time when I first stood by her eternal resting place covered with withered late summer grass, the way I perceived years, whether of the century or of life, was somewhat different, and Irma was four years older than I, so that the depth and nature of her misfortune - imagined, of course, for to this day I have not discovered anything about the

real one - was only available to me in the sound of her name and the melody her parents, it would seem, had presupposed in the time before any of the facts for this story ever came into being.

Fourteen years later, I was full ten years Irma's senior, every digit, every year and merit in the figure having gained its place and meaning so obvious and self-explanatory that it sometimes seemed to me life would be impossible without those precious synapses, without the digits filled with millions of human and animal deaths for the happiness of man and the prosperity of our species. I know today, for example, that Irma Santarius had died shortly before Bosnia and Herzegovina was annexed and placed under complete sovereignty of king and emperor Francis Joseph, so that she passed out on that historical wink of the eye which would over the next ninety years reap so many lives, deface and raze to the ground so many towns, and turn Bosnia into some sort of a global death commercial, a neon emblem of the apocalypse. Irma has not seen the neon. She died in an occupied country, which was yet to receive her white slab dappled with red capillaries and the mourners to utter a few words over it. Nothing can be said about her; for nothing is known about her, at this moment, not a thing, she is not in the telephone directories, no one has met her, no one has found the answers to the code of her disappearance - she disappeared, we know, she existed, for the writing says so, she will be no more for nothing that was is to be again.

It was already autumn, the heavy rains had come down, announcing the first real fog, when the town sinks into the stupor of long painful bleedings, and I have brought M.A., my first real girlfriend, to the tomb of Irma Santarius. She stared vacantly at the letters. Her eyes were like unripe walnuts, her eyes were such that I would not recall them and can speak of them only as of final dust, of nothing. Such were her eyes that looked at the white marble dappled with red capillaries, the marble of Irma Santarius, whose name to this day I cannot pass over in silence, cannot but pronounce it, using every opportunity to say it, even when it is completely inappropriate, she could have meant more than that name, so huge among the stones amid the graveyard warble.

This century will come to an end without her. The sound of her name is a too sweet bissell, it melts in the mouth, it overflows the ears, it lasts like popular songs, the tawdry melodies that have lost their innocence ages ago, and as of yesterday, or as of fifty years ago, are no longer even played in the key of guilt. She is a phony name, a pseudonym of a parochial poet, a graduation lie of a future porno diva, the first new year's eve drinking bout, the resulting hangover, the long years of dullness, a solitude deprived of all whys and wherefores, even of that last one Carus spoke of, like in a melodramatic premonition, before going for a car ride. Irma Santarius is like the big wheel of a Mississippi steamer, in a comic unreal even in the equinoxes of railway stations.

There is a moment when memories are rendered worthless. No one grieves at family abusers consumed by fire. Those whose corpses muddle the soil around Srebrenica are no one's kin or recollection. There is a moment when they become a datum for a collection of myths and legends, for sense new Bible, for some new Old and New Testament, generations will consecrate their lives to them, although they will not know or feel them, nor will they be their remembrance. Their bodies being ecologically decomposable, two hundred thousand dead Muslims meant less to the Western world than the nylon bags the decomposition of which takes two million years, but their souls will live as long as the

horror film ghosts live, they will persist forever, they will remain as long as the columns of Spartacus' slaves crucified along some Roman road remain, as long as the people of Israel subsist, as long as it takes to cross the desert and return. Irma Santarius, that innocent name, that adolescent longing, that grave that should have meant the beginning of a life where all things would be as clear as their roots are obscure, she is like a grave within a grave, she is a name nowhere to be found, she is Srebrenica and Bosnia, but without the dark tree; without the blackness they would leave behind. Irma Santarius is Bosnia pure, Irma Santarius is a news which dropped before it was heralded.

From now on, until the end of the world, there will be a clear demarcation between our graveyards. Our deaths will forever be kept apart like the realms of air and water are kept apart. Between the graves and the graveyards is the last stand. No one who conceives of his life like those who were making life for us conceived of it will go further. Between our Washingtons and Lincolns, between our Hitlers and Stalins there will be little difference. Our murderers and our writers will be more alike than twin siblings. Our genocides and our weddings will take place on the same spot at the same time. The same will be their meaning and end. In our churches, the same scurf of the soul will be shared by a lizard and the devil. Our God is the principle that governs our bodies, our God dwells in the liver, our God moves the water in our kidneys. It is worshipped by the calcium in our bones, our God comes into being at the moment of birth, it ceases with the first spring bullet, with the first shell and the last sigh. Our God is neither good, nor evil. He is equanimous, he makes the world around us indifferent. Because of him our eyes get bleached. Irma Santarius is a being from the time before our God. And therein is the cause of oblivion.

From the moment I got to know that name, from the time of my body's innocence, the time has passed in which I was meeting people, I saw a boy take the wallet from a policeman's back pocket, I have seen indecent pictures of public love, I was taking part - always as an observer - in sumless fist fights in the tourist resorts of socialist Yugoslavia, the cradle of international communism so reviled in by British Labourites and Italian Communists, wealthy Californian leftists dreaming of the working class, whose late morning wet dreams render meaningless Marx's ideal of equal rights for all, those in the mine shafts, and those yet to enter the mine shafts. I have met the fathers who give political lectures at the burial of their sons fallen for the homeland, I have come across a hundred models of patriotism and a hundred ways of betraying each and every one of them. I have met people who wept at the word revolution, I have met people who wept for their homes buried in the ground, I have met people who did not weep. They have died laughing as they ran from the hundred-headed cannons of our first youth, from the hundred-eyed infrared gun sights, and from the news that were forever coming too late, they have died laughing while the whole world wept in front of its tv sets, the ecologically aware screens of which no longer emit negative energy. They have died laughing, like heroes on the eve of great sport contests, they have died like the boys in Russian films die, their hair the colour of wheat and eyes the colour of pale leukaemic sky. They have died laughing at world record breaking killing rates. They have died laughing, slaughtered. I have met people who never wept due to their pronounced ecological awareness, their tears indecomposable like the silicone breasts of the late Great president's combine, whose arrival at Pale was announced by the telegraph wires and witnessed by the blithe



sparrows in whose veins a fierce patriot blood runs, patriotic like every step taken by the criminal to meet and embrace another criminal. We have spent our youth in the shades of crime, while Irma Santarius had sacrificed hers to some ancient virus, some heart failure, some mental insufficiency, which at the end of the century cannot be explained in the same terms they had been using at its beginning. I know this for I have known them all, in the end, and because I had been laughing with them. Today I am ashamed of every tear I have ever thought of.

That summer that would end with a walk to Irma Santarius' grave, the swelling of glands has ceased, the child diseases have passed me by for the last time, my body was strong enough to be considered grown up. I was feeling important decisions, and every new day, every waking up, heralded a new loss. Layer after layer of sheltered life was being shed, everything that could happen to me belonged to me only, I could decide everything for myself, like some minor deity, scared and wanting sleep to oversleep it all. I stood over the white marble slab, over the capillaries the pattern of which, though they were dead and cold, intensified the last layer, that last solitude a being freed from responsibility for others faces. Irma Santarius' tombstone has not been dissolved by acid rains, nor covered by moss. It was clean as if those who had had it erected had still been alive and as if no oblivion and no death had woken up her memory. I pondered great things, things that boys think about in the hours when they still do not dare consent to everything their physiology and sex determine. The next step, the step toward a woman, would be the biggest one takes in a lifetime. So terrible and huge that Irma Santarius was but a touching way of trying to avoid it. The way an envelope avoids a bow. I would like to recall it today. I would like to feel like that even after having seen the destruction of the world in which Irma Santarius' womb stands.

The first bullet and the first shell exploding on the terrace of my street were the first real experiences of the limits of my own body. Much stronger and more affective than any sex, any physical love or passion could ever have been a confirmation of the identity of the soul. That step, so longed and waited for, from my body toward hers, was divested of any meaning the very moment I felt that no one is capable of relieving the naked fear, of running for cover from a shell hissing through the air, of a death sentence assigned as in a chance game. The emptiness it leaves behind has no name, nor can anything be known of it until the day it is experienced.

After the years of fear and sorrow, after every heart gets hosed, only empty graves remain, like palimpsests of some new history that will be recognising its meaning and erasing every hope in the same way. At St. Joseph's graveyard, a hundred odd yards from the borderline between the Occidental and Oriental Christianity, beneath a white marble slab, a few bones and the soil by the name of Irma Santarius.

Xlarin, on the day of the second birth, August 1996

Mijoška Jevremović is a Bosnian author living in Zagreb  
Translated from the Croatian by Tadeusz Góral



Ivo ŽANIĆ

The manipulation of historical memory and the simultaneous religious vindication of that memory have proved to be expedient in the new social strategies of survival

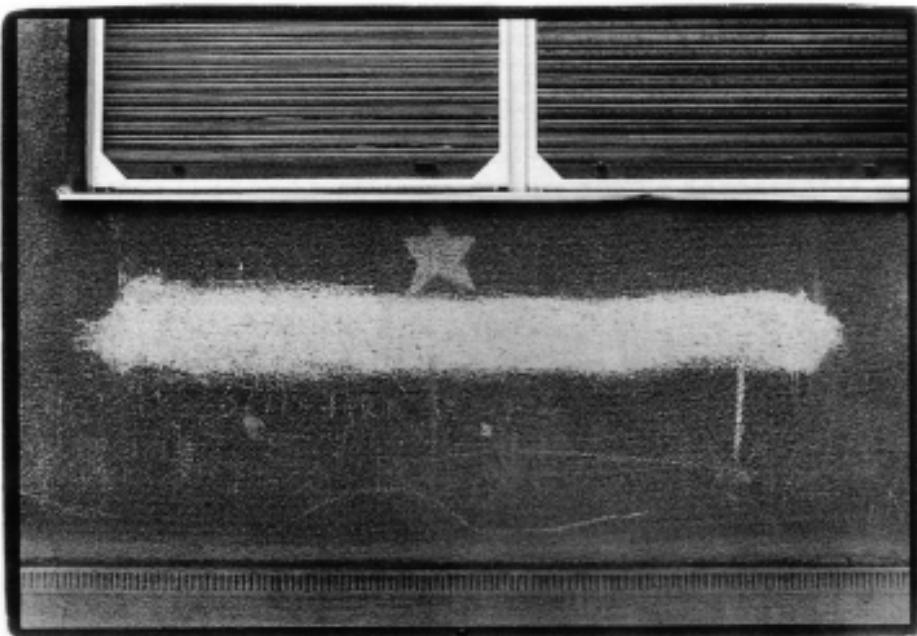
In September 1990, Hungarian director Tünde Felczi was interviewed by a Croatian weekly in the wake of the European success of her film *Bolshevik*. She described what one could term her cultural and political experiences with the colleagues from the West in the early nineties. Since she understood the nature of the war waged by the JNA and Milošević's Serbia from the very beginning, and therefore sympathised in humanitarian and political sense with Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, she tried to explain these events in particular, as well as the dominant atmosphere in the post-Communist countries in general, to her personal acquaintances in the West, in the hope of urging her colleagues to act in their respective public spheres. In those countries too, says she, "they knew from the first who the aggressor and who the victim is and they did nothing. They let the situation get hopelessly tangled up for that is the easiest way of avoiding responsibility." In those



Removal of the statue of Ross Khan in Tehran in 1979

dramatic weeks she spoke over the phone to an Australian friend and said to him that "all that would not have happened if only the West knew how to remember." To which he replied: "Yes, and if the East knew how to forget." The statement is pithy and anecdotal, the dialogue as if taken from a film script, yet it is difficult not to have the impression that it really does touch upon a vital and essential contemporary European phenomenon.

Another example. In September 1998, just as the academic year was about to begin, the UNESCO Office for Bosnia and Herzegovina recommended, actually demanded, that in the interest of the future and prospective reconciliation certain phrases be excised from the eighth grade grammar school textbooks because they contained the noun aggression



(e.g. "following the aggression against our country" or "the Serbo-Montenegrin aggression against the other republics of Yugoslavia") and the main crime (e.g. "they will account for their crimes", "I say to the criminals they will not escape punishment" or "are they aware of their crimes"). To be precise, since the textbooks had already been printed and even distributed, it was demanded that crime be crossed out and error written over. The author of the textbook which came under fire because of the word crime - the textbook being a grammar and not, as one might be led to suppose, a history primer, and the examples in question being intended for declension exercises - has succinctly given the gist of the misunderstanding in terms in the main resembling the dialogue of the Hungarian director and his Australian friend: "The point is that the foreigners would fail to teach us to forget. The point is also that we do not want to forget. Lest it comes to pass again. It would help if they ceased to consider us halfwits."

Two more examples. In the Croatian areas along the river Drava, which had for five

years been the scene of warfare instigated from Serbia and of grave crimes against the civilian population, due to international pressure, a five year ministerium was authorised on the teaching of the events from the period between 1989 and 1990; while the Council of Europe announces that one of the conditions Bosnia and Herzegovina would have to meet to become its member would be a ministerium of as yet unspecified duration on the teaching of history as such. Inspired by intentions the ability of which one has no reason to question and the indubitable experience of how liable memory is to manipulation (and that in these wars and in the preparations for them, this has been done on a massive scale with the well known tragic consequences), the imposition of such instructions, however, still overlook the equally important fact that directed oblivion can also be manipulated (and that in the wars in question this has been done on an equally massive scale and with consequences no less tragic.)

With this same cast of mind originated not so long ago the idea of publishing, also under the auspices of UNESCO, a series of anonymous edi-

tions of works of world literature, the criterion for inclusion being that the work in question should contain no data, characters or descriptions any of the member states would deem offensive. Thus, Kierkegaard's *The Crucifixion God* gives offence to Austria, Andrić's *The Bridge on the River Drina* to Turkey and so forth. As there is no work in the world that does not contain characters making abusive or derisive remarks about each other or their respective native lands, they are then purged of such instances in translation. A manifestly, in short, is being fibberized which is then represented as a desirable truth, a whitewashed world of sterniment is being constructed, into which we, the barbarians, are then to be convoyed by its cheerful bureaucracy (and it would only be interesting to know what would such a strait-jacketed mindset make of Dumas's famous saying "Ah - quoth don Fernando in Portuguese," perhaps interpret it as an abuse of a Portuguese by a Frenchman, perhaps perceive the dangerous possibility that this blunder might lead a non-French reader to conclude that the French are not very bright people if they write such nonsense.)

It is misleading to think that the purging of memory - the initial existential violence being in the cause of time and development of culture substantiated and transformed into reconciliation and forgiving - went unhampered even though in our enlightenment perspective it might appear a process more or less steady in progress. For many a social force has soon found out that memories of various past conflicts are evidently very serviceable in the sense that they can be used to significant advantage in contemporary competitive clashes of various social groups. The manipulation of historical memory and the simultaneous religious vindication of that memory have proved to be expedient in the new social strategies of survival. Seeing that religious memory is the most permanent one, politics has slyly taken advantage of it and profited greatly thereby.

The inciting of religious fanaticism with the sacralization of politics has the effect of actually situating the real temporal designation of the conflicts taking place in our time in the past. Political strategies have in time become inseparable from religious recollections and religious communities are being dragged into the process of restoring of ancient memories, even though religion itself is never foregrounded in the conflict, least of all in the contemporary period when the secularization of society abolishes every social manifestation of the sacred. Against the backdrop of such conjunctions, within the framework of political religion, it is the various parts rather than parts of the present that are in conflict. What is at stake is never - neither in Northern Ireland, Croatia nor Bosnia and Herzegovina - the truth but always the suffering borne in the past, now to be retaliated and taken vengeance for. And in that belligerent past everyone has at times been the victim. It is, of course, true that the was being waged are never exclusively the wars of unhealed remembrances but it is also true that were it not for those remembrances they would not turn out so ferocious and brutal.

Ideologies have incited memories and memories have instigated conflicts and thus have the vicious circles of fear and mistrust been created. The ideologues are concerned with nothing but influence, effect and outward appearance and that can only be procured by means of religious insignia, ritualistic artics and sacrosanct rhetoric. For the common folk simply do not understand any other language.

In the (South)East of Europe two more reasons account for this. First, in Western societies nation was understood primarily as a political notion, while in the Eastern ones it was being lived as a cultural fact, which meant that

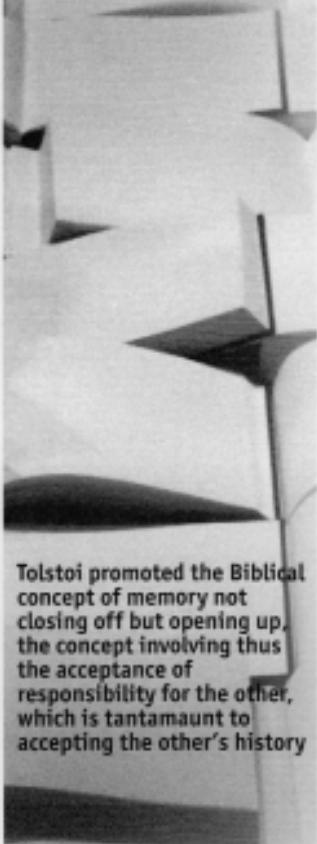
religion played a prominent, or even dominant, role, as the nation was rendered inconceivable outside the religious framework. Religion was thus implicated into politics by way of culture, which, needless to say, made the situation worse instead of resolving it. Second, using the template of experiences from the times before Communism, in the societies that were historically Roman Catholic, the Church remained the only guardian and keeper of the culture of national memory, and their rituals and rhetoric have thus become familiar even to that large part of the passively oppositional public which would otherwise not be drawn to the Church on purely spiritual grounds. Religious social powers were often put to use of ensuring the very survival and mere subsistence of certain groups, communities or peoples, making it hard to go against that goals and succeed. However, many a time, not excluding the period after 1989, this threat of extinction was staged, fabricated or even fainted with the aim of invoking the religious powers of the people in conflict requiring greater deadliness and madlike bravery; the characteristics only religious fanaticism and ruthless fundamentalism are capable of conjuring up.

### **It is impossible to say just how much more we have fooled ourselves than anyone else could ever fool us**

In the end, in every version, man remains abandoned and forgotten in the complex interplay of the duality of politics and the adaptability of religion: of politics clad in religious attire to appear more truthful and of religion believing to be saving itself from an unexpectedly complex reality by means of shedding in political categories; of oblivion presented as a release from the torments of the past and of remembrance which, in such asphyxiated form, binds him to reality.

Today, in many of these countries, a strategic syncretism (Ch. Jaffrelot) is at work - a manipulation of traditional symbolism so as to gather the faithful populace and to goal it to worldly, therefore political, action, and so as to feed it to that purpose with remembrance of evils unremitted and of grievances unforgiven. And verily it is difficult to conceive of a discipline or a combination of disciplines that would be capable of estimating with but a semblance of exactitude to what extent do the self-preservation instinct, the social subconscious, the fear of death and destruction, the evil historical memory, the self-inspired oblivion and - as the aforementioned examples demonstrate - the oblivion ordered from without, irrespective of the motives, each partake of this nauseating context.

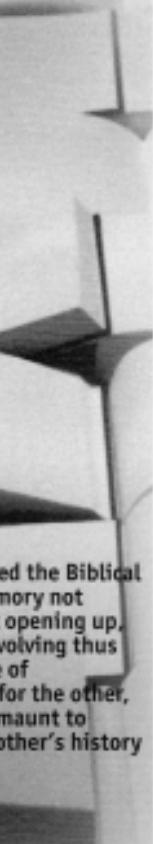
Finally, it is impossible to say just how much more we have fooled ourselves than anyone else could ever fool us. During the whole Communist era an important part of the



Croatian (and not only Croatian) prejudice concerning the West was our enchantment by it. Press to simple conclusions in a forcedly simple world; for years we saw in the West nothing but the positive alternative to tyranny, captivity and injustice. Such an idealised notion of the West conformed to our self-fashioned image of ourselves, inscribed with the raised awareness of our own cultural and civilisational superiority to other peoples of former Yugoslavia, as being an integral part of just such Western world - for an enchanting picture segues an enchanting frame. Since we were enchanted by our own image, it was only logical that the West, framing that image, should have been enchanting as well. But, a war broke out in which we had to become disenchanted. In consequence, another sobering up took place - and probably not only for us - while we used to regard culture an important fulcrum of our Occidentalism, it now transpired that the West no longer exists as a unified cultural category but only as an economic and military strategic notion. The idea of the West is no longer defined in terms of Greek philosophy, nor Roman law, nor Judeo-Christianity, but of market economy, party democracy, and (high) standards of living. In other words, it is defined by the art of oblivion, while we remain buried deep in our remembrances, to our mind synonymous with culture.

On the other hand, in the postmodern era and in the sphere generally designated Western, politics is concerned with light subjects - to coin a makeshift term - such as ecology, peacekeeping, human rights and civil liberties, legality of elections, and no longer with the dark aspects of the former era: bloodshedding conflicts, deep-seated hatreds, everlasting memories, and unquenchable vengeance. One would think that conditions are improving for man, but an closer scrutiny it is revealed that in the postmodern era, though the belligerent politics may be gone, a tired responsibility certainly lingers on. The slackening of belligerence politics and oblivion of remembrance being parallel processes. Postmodern man has an ever shortening memory, being due to the modernist rhythm of information and sermotic input liberally condensed to a one day memory span; and even when he moves backward, it is more nostalgic than remembrance. Apart from this one day's memory, there is also one man's memory - the novels of Marcel Proust and James Joyce documenting best to what extent in the modern man's remembrance purely intimate, closed, personal, individualist, and even egotistic.

Can then this postmodern man with a day's memory and exclusively personal remembrances be at all comprehended by the people



endowed with everlasting memories and their whole historical consciousness' remembrance, and vice versa? (And we are not here concerned with an authenticity that can be exactly established from without, nor with an evaluative hierarchy privileging either former or latter kind of memory, but with an internal, in principle unique and inviolable, emotional authenticity, with the data of psychological reality.)

This framework does not rule out conceiving that a few of those indifferent postmoderns would find the to avail themselves of the belligerence or vigour of the premodem times, just as some of those coming from a waning premodem might wish for the sedation and intimacy offered by postmodernity. In the end, however, both of these turn out to be delusions - and nothing remains but to be forever kept in suspension between the temptation of belligerence and the temptation of indifference.

To combine authentic humanity and the supposed part is in all probability impossible - he who remembers the evils of the past is not likely to be doing good in the present. Neither can the solution lie in the complete oblivion of memory, as in the case of the postmodern man, for that is nothing but taking the easy way out of the inescapable premodem remembrances. The answer can only be found in the change of attitude toward memory, which would encompass both the remembrance of good and the remembrance of evil. So, on both sides of what used to be the iron curtain we should become aware that it is necessary to step out of this vicious circle of premodem remembrance of evil and of postmodern oblivion (and its variant, which we might term delayed remembrance, actually remembrance with delayed legitimacy.)

This variant, used in the examples cited, closely resembles what the new social élites in the post-Communist countries are frequently charged with, namely that they are intent on inducing collective amnesia as regards the Communist era. We can now observe that they are not alone in this. It would seem that such policies of delayed remembrance and programmed amnesia as used in France after 1945 with respect to the Vichy collaborationism, in Spain after Franco, and in Adenauer's Germany after Nazism, really did help in social consolidation and democratisation of the society, yet these are enough examples of shades of evidence of the nauseating truth constantly being glimpsed and revealed, disturbing the society and creating internal frictions of perhaps greater directness, the parts being more easily manipulated than the whole. And the whole can only be grasped by memory, not in the

## Tolstoi promoted the Biblical concept of memory not closing off but opening up, the concept involving thus the acceptance of responsibility for the other, which is tantamount to accepting the other's history



Igor Grubić: *Nolten Book*, 1998

sense of a national political projection but in Paul Valéry's mythic sense: "Memory would fain turn contingency into essence and perception into function". In his note, he had not named this function, but it would not be wrong to conceive of it as justice.

Tolstoi promoted the Biblical concept of memory not closing off but opening up, the concept involving thus the acceptance of responsibility for the other, which is tantamount to accepting the other's history. Such a reconciliation of memories as a reconciliation of histories includes, as a matter of fact implicates, the cleansing of memory, in the sense expounded by Pope John Paul II addressing the Swiss Protestant congregations five years ago: "The cleansing of our memories will involve frank admission of mutual evil deeds and of wrongdoings in our treatment of each other." Such an admission, A.D. Falzon has written soon afterwards, having in mind the tragedy of Northern Ireland, "isolates our acceptance of responsibility for the harm in the other's memory," while "reconciliation includes acknowledging the interdependence of our histories." Through such mutual acceptance of histories we enable each other to be free and by means of reconciliations of memo-

ries to create a new identity, instead of having it violently imposed upon us. In his treatise *Le malheur du siècle*, Alain Badiou has recently written of this century's two totalitarian ideologies - Nazism, which has rightly been subject to devastating ethical criticism, and Communism, which even after 1989 still "enjoys amnesia and memory of sorts." In fact, he has recently written about those who unperturbedly state that it is impossible to be a Nazi after Auschwitz, while one can still be a Communist after Godag, for, in the words of one of those partaking in The Black Book of Communism controversy, "85 million dead in no way tarnish the ideal of Communism". Badiou notes the immense incongruity of remembrance (as regards Nazism) and oblivion (as regards Communism), which cannot be explained away by ignorance or not being informed of the atrocities. It can only be explained by - conscious or unconscious but indisputably evident - connecting the view that one man's death is of greater, or conversely lesser, worth than another man's. The conclusion his book offers is that the scourge of the 20th century and its legacy might perhaps lie in the graves and the attitude taken toward the victims of both totalitarian regimes,

If history and humankind should salute the Jews for scrupulously keeping the archives of the Holocaust and the memory of their victims, these peoples who have forgotten their dead remain something of an enigma. And regardless of how much and with what good reason we abhorred or ridiculed certain forms of invoking historical interest in the post-Communist countries under that rule they do not fall. These countries can be reprimanded, and justly more often than not, with regard to the reverence the victims are due in the interest of immediate political ends, but an equally convincing case can be made against those on the other side, wondering whether an important part of their self-sufficient modernity is not precisely disdain they show for the dead. Is not that apelogy of oblivion but a new form wherein still, nevertheless there shot the Pictian revolutionaries fixed at the dials of tower clocks on the eve of the battle, in the righteous determination that they were setting themselves free from time and from history?

*See Zivković's article in the section "Bridge against forgetfulness".*

Translated from the Croatian by Nataša Šikić

# This would never happen in Macedonia

DONEN GEORGIEVSKI

Copenhagen, October

Dear Victor,

I came across Daniel Patrick Moynihan's words yesterday: "These are just eight states on Earth which both existed in 1934 and have not had their form of government changed by violence since then (the U.S., Britain, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Switzerland, Sweden, New Zealand). The defining conflict in the era ahead is the ethnic conflict. It promises to be savage. Get ready for 50 new countries in the world in the next 50 years. Most of them will be born in bloodshed." Are we living this now?

What happened with the letter for the visa? It's getting unbearable in Copenhagen. We live in a performance I saw yesterday. It's called *Schism*, it's by some theatre company from a small town in Macedonia, Kumanovo - a performance in which war reigns. In the perfor-

mance everybody's at war, officially we're not. In the theatre - plastic tank cars are outside - planes. Inside: characters that were crippled in the Irish conflict; outside - actors that fled from bombed England. Real theatre and Hollywoodesque reality: my friends buy cocaine from Balkan journalists; my colleagues work in Irish refugee camps for Russian humanitarians - the Balkan Community does nothing. You can see some 28 camps around Esbjerg. The biggest city of tents in the world! The winter approaches - people will freeze to death. Do you know you can't have a tetanus shot in Copenhagen any more? Everything's gone for the refugees. Somebody mentioned cholera. Others mentioned heavy art sales over Athens. In Copenhagen, we go to sleep with all the corpses from London to Belfast from the last 20 years. The bed is so small, we fall out, *see we need!* Since the Russian bombing began a million and a half were deported to Denmark.



all seeking shelter. The Netherlands closed their border - they said they'd be happy to accept some others if they were in danger in time. They are putting thousands of Irish in tanks, and they deport them from Edinburgh and Aberdeen. What are we going to do with them? Blair is sending us refugees on a tap. Some say he's got several thousands of civilians surrounded in central Ireland - just in case, if we're not supportive...

Victor, what is going on? The balance is lost. I talked to London the other day, asking how they were - "A pretty rhetorical question, isn't it?" - they say as I hear the air-raid siren in the background. Blair says one thing, Belgian something else - you can't bear all the "pacemaking, collateral damage, air campaign, human rights" bullshit! The more Balkan and Russian humanitarians I see, the less I believe in help!

It's the fourth month of the bombing of Britain and Ireland - London is ruined, Birmingham, Dublin, Leeds, Belfast, Liverpool, Bradford... They've created desert, which they now call peace. BBC is bombed over and over again - "to destroy Blair's fascist propaganda machine" - the Moscow media say. And they lie all the same. The Russians support the IRA, and tens of other terrorist groups while ordering us to keep our borders open - to "stop the cleansing"? Another mass grave near Belfast was reported, as the clouds from the Birmingham factories make sure the English get several tea. And us too. Who can stop the winds? Scotland keeps on complaining about the Russians bombing their ports - I heard British troops closed the borders there. Now the Thess and Shannons are equally bloody. In the end the peace proposal from Eurosocialist will be accepted. But this time Big Ben will be known as Small Ben.

We keep on explaining our situation to the Russians and the Balkan Community, once we were in Europe - we had enough for everyone. Now we can't even get on our feet. Since the signing of the Warsaw Pact, the Balkan Community shut off Denmark's export of industrial machinery and sea products. Thousands were fired. It's been tense ever since. We don't know what to do with the refugees - on the other hand they are people tax. All the Russians can promise is a "fast track entry" into the Warsaw Pact! The UNHCR suggests we should temporarily employ 30000 of the Irish refugees - they get hostile from baseline. What about the 300 000 unemployed in Denmark? Just as we started entering the Balkan Community, Blair entered Ireland. Why did he do that?

"There is no way to peace - peace is the way."

- you say. I understand - it's nice to customize plates while driving from Pristina to Belgrade, from Sarajevo to Vukovar whenever you like. We need visa to even get to Paris. Well, I say: "Peace is the time between two wars". Nobody breaks the law as often as the strongest. My cousin didn't want to go to the shelter in Canterbury. They found him dead under the rains. A friend of mine, called me up from the camp yesterday. She's been raped, every single night - in the name of the Irish nation. When I came to think of it, I might not need the better for the visa. Where would I go? This is my home, like it or not. I know you would say there's plenty of work in Macedonia, but how much is there to be done in Denmark? And yet every act is futile. We didn't ask for this war. We worked against it.

Thucydides lists three causes of war: interest, fear and honor. I've listed my rules for behavior for the rest of my life: 1. do no harm; 2. the opposite of the truth is as true as the truth itself; 3. act with love upon the first two, no matter the futility.

I don't know, Victor... A Croatian magazine called *Pozitiv* asked me to write about what's going on in my country. Only the knot of these two sentences describe that:  
The sentence below is true.  
The sentence above is not true.

Whenever I see a pregnant woman these days I think of the depicted uranium the Russians use. What will the newborn kids look like? What an epiphany for the 21 century! I guess Basile's words still warn us: "Get ready for 50 new countries in the world in the next 50 years. Most of them will be born in bloodshed".

I hope you don't understand a word of this letter. Because if you do, you've been touched by Bill too. And I wouldn't wish you that, not even if you were my executioner...

Ivo Popović released a new single - the money is for the refugees from London.

How are you? Did you get the prize at the Film Festival in Sarajevo? I heard Spielberg was there. Hold on baby - you're almost there!

Take care,  
Jevgenie

Jovan Georgievski is a writer and dramatist from Skopje.  
Video stills: Branka Brezovač, Jelena



# DISLOCATION of CULT



BORIS BUDEN

*The universal can be articulated  
only in response to a challenge  
from (its own) outside.*

Judith Butler

There are at least two Europes: the one within the political form of the European Union and the other one - the excluded one - which we usually call post-Communist Eastern Europe. And this boundary between the two is exactly the point I am going to speak from - as an element which is excluded from Europe, but which belongs to it nevertheless.

That I am speaking as someone who is both a European and a non-European. This split predicament is far from being merely conceptual, i.e. emotionally neutral. It is a very strong feeling, too. I would like to give you an example, the one you may all recognise from your everyday life. On the doors of our shopping malls we often see an icon of a dog with the following message: I must stay outside. There is an important difference between the dog on the sign and an East-European standing at the gates of today's European Union. It is not just that the dog cannot read the message, and so does not feel humiliated. There is

a much more important point - he cannot understand the political meaning of this message - and this is precisely what an East European is meant to do! For, when the European Union sends its message to Eastern Europe or the rest of the world, it sees it directed away from itself, and from this perspective the message is always cultural. The recipient, on the contrary sees the message and its meaning head-on, as an act of political exclusion. It is the contemporary notion of culture that guards this European border. It is this culture which decides who may come in and who must stay outside.

#### INTERNET REVOLUTION

Among all the events which have marked the recent Yugoslav war there is one which has gained the unanimous sympathy of the western audience - the street protest of the Belgrade students in the winter of 96/97. This is the only event which has been fully recognised in its historical scope and, in that sense, included in the historical experience of the West. All other events - in fact the whole process of democratisation and liberation from the Communist rule - were somehow excluded



- mainly because of their openly nationalist character. But the case of the Belgrade protest was different. The American magazine for the so-called net culture - the culture of the new media such as the Internet - *Wired*, also known as The Silicon Valley Prophet, published a report on the Belgrade protest in its April edition. The title was: Internet Revolution. A journalist sent by *Wired* from sunny California into the cold Serbian winter found everything he was looking for on the streets of Belgrade: an evil dictator and a corrupt police regime; the suppressed masses longing for freedom, with the students in the vanguard; and most importantly, the Net as a weapon in the struggle for democracy. That winter, Serbia and Belgrade became the centre of the world for *Wired*. Something completely new happened there, something which had never been seen before: As far as *Wired* was concerned, these protests in Serbia became the first major example of the Internet playing a role in a popular uprising against an authoritarian regime. *Wired* believes that there is something

inherently democratic about the Net. In its eyes, access to the Internet is incompatible with authoritarianism. And this ought to be obvious. The only question which remains unanswered is, what percentage of the population, once connected, marks the point of no return for authoritarianism. *Wired* didn't know if it is 1 percent, 2 percent, or 50 percent, but was sure that this point of no return had already been reached in Serbia where democracy had won the day. The first Internet revolution in the history of mankind had taken place in Serbia and had succeeded. There is little point in laughing about this naivete. It would be much better to ask, where does it originate and who is its real subject? The same issue of *Wired* includes an essay written by Jon Katz, entitled: "Birth of a Digital Nation". This is a kind of manifesto of the new American political class and its ideology. The citizens of the new Digital Nation are young, educated, affluent. They inhabit *Wired* institutions and industries, universities, computer and telecoms companies, Wall Street and

financial firms, and the media. Their slogan is: The world's information is being liberated and so, as a consequence, are we. These young people, who form the heart of the digital world, create a new political ideology by simply taking the best from the tired old American political mainstream: the hammarian of liberalism, the economic opportunity of conservatism, plus a strong sense of personal responsibility. Their postpolitical ideology informs a new kind of politics beyond the traditional choices of left/right, liberal/conservative, Republican/Democrat. What makes this new political class - or the postpolitics, as Katz call them - different from other American political classes and options? A new set of political ideas? Of course not - they are eclectic. It is, rather, a brand-new culture. Music, movies, magazines, television shows, some books, are extremely important to them, but not as forms of entertainment, rather as a means of identity. While there is a huge cultural gap separating them from old politics, they are nearly blind to the color and ethnic



Photo: S. Ristic

heritage of the people who enter their culture. Thus, it is culture which separates them from other political forces and again, it is culture which enables them to join the other and enjoy its difference; it is culture which governs a peaceful coexistence of their political contradictions: they can simultaneously be extremely tolerant multiculturalists (They don't merely enhance tolerance as an ideal; they are tolerant) and efficient revolutionaries (They are not talking revolution; they're making one happen). At stake here are not the ideological fantasies of the postpolitical subject - in the sense of political content, they are totally vacuous. What is important is rather the fact that there is always culture, which determines the political identity in question. And culture again is what controls the procedures of exclusion or inclusion. The protest of the Belgrade students in the winter of 96/97 became an historical event, and assumed the meaning of a world revolution not because of its political importance - it was politically completely fruitless - but because it was recognised in terms of its cultural identity. Or more precisely - what has been recognised (by the western postpolitical subject) was the universal value of its cultural identity. What was taken by the way the protesting students were using computers and the Internet. There is something about computers that seems to promote a certain culture wherever in the world you may be. From the point of view of the Belgrade students we may see how they succeeded in the universalisation of their particular problem. However, this did not take place within a political domain. It only happened in the

realm of culture. The political conflict - of which these protests were an expression - remained excluded in its senseless particularity. In spite of the fact that those who were involved in it became the vanguard of a worldwide cultural revolution. The inclusion of the Other may succeed, but only as a kind of depoliticisation.

#### UNIVERSALITY IN CULTURE

Universality in culture is always problematic. On the one hand, the meaning of "the universal" is culturally variable, it depends on its specific cultural articulations. There is no universal culture. This is where the multiculturalist idea of tolerance arises: we should tolerate another culture in its different but somehow equal values. All equal, all different! On the other hand, it seems impossible to think of human rights without some universal perspective. Let's take an example - contradiction for instance. For some people, same women, it is a part of their cultural identity in which they want to be recognised and tolerated. For us - from the standpoint of our culture, of course - it is a severe violation of human rights, and we somehow cannot but exclude those who practise it from our idea of the "human". Our notion of universality does not cover such practices. In other words, there is always a conflict when we ask for universality in culture. The American feminist philosopher Judith Butler sees nothing bad in such a conflict. On the contrary: universality always means some procedure of exclusion or inclusion. It articulates itself only when it is contested, challenged from the outside - only when the element which has been excluded suddenly claims to be it being covered by the universal. At that very moment it sets in motion the so-called performative contradiction - it exposes the contradictory character of the established conventions of universality and in that way provokes its re-articulation. In spite of the fact that she recognises the political meaning of the conflict which effects the re-articulation of the universal, Judith Butler still finds its solution within the realm of culture - in the labour of so-called cultural translation.

#### CULTURE: THE CONTINUATION OF POLITICS BY OTHER MEANS

It is now clear that the place which was occupied in the traditional definition, that of Clausewitz, is now taken by culture: the continuation of politics by other means. At the same time, war becomes a kind of pure cultural phenomenon - the expression of a fatal lack of (political) culture. This has been best illustrated by the way the West interpreted the so-called wars of Yugoslav succession - as a part



Photo: G. Djordjevic

of the cultural identity of the Balkans (you know: they have been fighting each other for centuries). And this, too, is perfectly understandable: how could not be the consequence of an escalated political conflict, when the only form of politics being practised by the postpolitical subject is maintaining a balance between different cultural identities, under conditions of multiculturalist tolerance? There is no longer any class struggle because, like race, gender, age, ethnicity and other cultural identities, class has become politically neutral. No wonder some multiculturalists today define culture as a war of positions. Let us imagine for the moment that Judith Butler's main thesis - concerning the intrinsically reactive character of the universal - "The universal can be articulated only in response to a challenge from (its own) outside" - is developed into its political consequence. This would completely change the general view of recent history we all have. The relationship between the East European Communism of the past and human rights would emerge in a totally different light: the Iron Curtain was not only a symbol and a means of violating human rights, the border which separated the so-called free world from Communist totalitarianism, but also the border at which Communism - as the outside of Capitalism, that is, its own excluded element - was challenging the West and therefore forcing it into a constant political re-articulation of the universal; i.e. the articulation of the politics of human rights - as the postulation of some (culturally) specific rights as universal human rights - on shaping concrete forms of political solidarity - through dissidents, for instance. What we have been



witnessing, from the fall of Communism to the present day, is a regressive process of dissolving the concrete forms of political solidarity. In place of the politics of human rights, the culture of human rights has appeared. Today, they are a meta-political category - a kind of cultural standard which serves as a criterion in the procedures of exclusion and inclusion.

#### POLITICAL CRITIQUE OF CULTURE

Culture, however, is the worst possible mediator of political antagonisms today. In the post-modern context of late capitalism, culture has lost all distance - including the so-called critical distance in particular. There is no longer any autonomy of culture, not even semi-autonomy. It has been abolished in the new space of postmodernism, and this dissolution of an autonomous space of culture should be imagined - as Fredric Jameson once pointed out - more in terms of an explosion: everything in our social life - from the economic sphere and state power to the structure of our psyche itself - has become somehow "cultural". Under such circumstances, is it still possible to think of some cultural critique (*Kulturskritik*) which could have a political effect? Does it still make any sense to search for a subject of this critique which could inaugurate the re-articulation of the universal, and thus overcome the historical deadlock in a utopian way, from within the realm of culture - in the way described by Butler: "It is the future anticipation of a universality that has not yet arrived, for which we have no ready concept, one whose articulations will only fail, if they do, from a cotermination of

universality at its already imagined borders." It is hardly to be expected that the subject of today's multicultural ideology - the so glorified cultural hybrid of postmodernity - could really have enough transgressive power to set in motion the stalled process of political re-articulation of the universal. For, even if it were to try, it could never leave its ideologically generated framework - its native cultural rhetoric. As a rhetoric, it - multiculturalism - challenges any concept of the nation as a cultural whole, mutating nationalism into a hybridised cultural subjective consciousness that can act as a bulwark against racism (Felix Wehner). The political effect of this cultural transformation of the universal has a defensive character: by preventing the conflict from escalating, the new, already re-articulated concept of the universal defends the existing system and, what is more, it does not just cross the existing boundaries (which Butler envisions in her idea of the extension of universality), but on the contrary, by building bulwarks, it actually fortifies them. At the same time it thereby excludes the politically excessive expansion of its own inner antagonisms - racism for instance. Does not this picture remind us of today's Europe? It is precisely the European Union, which has, by means of multiculturalism, domesticated its own nationalism, built the *bulwarks* around itself, casting out racism, which, as an excluded part of European political identity, has now become a substantive part of the cultural identity of those who are not yet culturally compatible with Europe. Those excluded have to pay the price of the ideological dream of a unified Europe which "aims at achieving the impossi-

ble - an equilibrium between the two components: full integration into the global market, while at the same time retaining the specific national and ethnic identities. What we are getting in post-Communist Eastern Europe is a kind of negative dystopian realisation of this dream - in short, the worst of both worlds: uncontaminated market combined with ideological fundamentalism." (Snezof Željko Pread) though it is of the political advantage of its cultural rhetoric, multiculturalism openly admits the impossibility of its use in political practice. For it argues the hybrid - and not fixed - character of culture in modern nation-states. However, politics is always a national, state politics; it always operates within pure or impure cultural contexts. The politics of the multiculturalists is thus a practice based on the essentialist fallacy of pure cultural identities. It is a kind of culturally inferior activity. Politics, then, for the multiculturalists, is the other. What should these excluded do under these circumstances? Those to whom politics is like a destiny, and who suffer from it in the same way as culturally backward people suffer from legacy? Those who, precisely because of this cultural handicap, are able to give political sense to their position - the position of an excluded element which can change the state of its exclusion only through a radical re-articulation of the universal in which it hasn't found a place for itself. This element is today by no means a leveraged cultural hybrid. To it - as to an object of narcissistic enjoyment of the multiculturalists - the gates in the bulwark of the universal have always been open. The subject which can change the existing conceptions of the universal is the one which appears as its own excluded part, as its bastard - an illegitimate child who can abolish the state of its illegitimacy only by changing the law itself, i.e. the social conditions which enabled its universalisation. In spite of the fact that he aligns himself with the position which the proletarians occupied in classical Marxism, his starting point is not the critique of political economy. The bastard proceeds from a radical (re)politicisation of his cultural excludeness, and therefore from the standpoint of a political critique of culture. His goal is to make a utopian breach in the historically stalled state of the universal. But the universal does not (re)articulate itself along the lines by means of which we differentiate cultural identities and even less from the multicultural bulwarks preserving the existing situation. The universal neutralises itself as the barricades - on which, after all, it was born in the political and historical sense.

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# The Theater of War: What I Learned from My Friends

DRAGAS KLAZ

What can the theater do in a time of war? Colleagues and students were again posing this question frequently to me this spring, since the beginning of the NATO Balkans adventure. The war has come back, engulfed us all, challenging our emotional stability, political reasoning and professional responsibility. Let us do something as theater professionals about the most recent outbreak of war on the Balkans, says an English friend of mine. Let us put together an international theater team and develop a production exploring the ongoing conflict, investigating the victims and the perpetrators, measuring the moral goals, political objectives and applied means, seeking the ways to peace and justice, says he. I am experiencing a déjà vu.

2

In 1992 I was involved in initiating an international theater production to respond to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the siege of Sarajevo, working with the Sarajevo theater

director Miraj Palovid who was at the time staying with me in Amsterdam. It was our attempt to overcome our profound frustration and anxiety. Political initiatives, humanitarian assistance will be taken care of by others, we felt then, while our task was to think from our own motives. On a few evenings Hartz and I were sitting at the computer, constructing an outline for a production on Sarajevo, with the city as a hero and a martyr. We were discussing the history of the place, its mentality and life style, its multicultural character, its humour and music, its literature and its slang. Sarajevo embodied the values and attitudes that the war in Yugoslavia has been systematically destroying, now turning this city into its symbolic and factual target.

At the peak of the summer we sent our proposal to several colleagues around Europe knowing that most of them were in their offices at this time of year to receive our fax. Few weeks later there were several responses to our proposal, several interested parties,

Sarajevo photo: Bernd Ulrich





Most importantly, Goran Stefanovski, a successful Macedonian playwright and our friend, trying at the time to live simultaneously in Skopje and Canterbury, joined us as the author. In October, at the meeting of IETM, a large European theater network, the interested parties got together in Ljubljana. Chris Touch, a Stockholm colleague, took up on himself to put the production together; Hamburg Summer Festival was interested and London LIFT as well, and, most importantly, Antwerp, that was next spring to become the European Cultural Capital for 1993, Stockholm because a production base. Haris and Goran moved there [in an apartment near the Town Hall] and made it an unofficial Sarajevo embassy. They were polling books and music, working intensely together, Chris and other partners were seeking money and completing the team, an international cast was quickly put together. I stayed in the background, following the process from a distance, talking regularly with all the people involved. Haris went to

Ljubljana for Christmas to stay with his friends there and before the New Year he suddenly disappeared leaving a message on the answering machine that he had to return to Sarajevo. Months later he told me how he tried to board some of the UN flights from Zagreb, then traveled on buses through Croatia and Herzegovina, continued on foot through a dangerous terrain and on the evening of December 31 reached the UN-controlled Sarajevo airport. He managed to avoid patrols and search lights and crawling across the tarmac sneaked into the city to surprise his mother and sister in their house just before midnight.

It is a miraculous story but we did not know it at the time - we were all thrown into a deep crisis, the production was in turmoil. After some hasty consultations, Slobodan Urosevski, a Macedonian theater director who has often worked with Goran and directed most of his plays, was invited to take over. He courageously accepted to step in, aware of all the risks involved in working with a concept and a cast made by another director. Some time was lost, the work was speeded up and in March, Sarajevo, *The Tale of a City* opened the European Cultural Capital program in Antwerp, in a newly restored Beursa theater. Before the opening night, there was a moving ceremony on the square outside, with video interviews of Sarajevo projected onto a wall, flowers and candles brought by many. Haris was not among the people interviewed, but I was thinking of him the whole evening.

The production received a lot of publicity, for me and many others it was a moving gesture, a cry of outrage, mixed with some humor, some nostalgia, engulfing the audience in pain. The company went on to perform through the spring and the summer in several European cities, performances usually followed with discussions, sometimes harsh and confrontational. In July, at the London LIFT festival, I took part in one of these talks, in the Riverside studios, and I was content to see how the performance focuses and clarifies the moral and political issues involved. It went further than just squeezing empathy out of the audience, it reinforced the sense of responsibility and metaphorized the urban texture, lifestyle and values being destroyed in Sarajevo. It did not attempt to compete with the gruesome television images that have by then become common place but individualized the peril and reinforced and transmuted the anguish. Goran, whom I have known for years as someone who does not like to speak in public, surprised me with a new eloquence and sharpness of his formulation. He was precise and incisive in the discussion, challenging and direct. I remember him talking about the dramaturgy of a protest, theater not being able to reach to the very core of the pain and

horror of war but contrasting its action around it, developing a discourse around the catastrophe. Of course, the production could not stop the war nor lift the siege of the city, but it brought to the European theater public an idea of what Sarajevo was like before the outbreak of the war and helped them to understand why the city became the main target of the assault.

As the time went by, I was becoming increasingly aware of the production's shortcomings, caused not only by the change of the director but by the lack of time needed for an international cast to come together and build cohesive and coherent style, to find vigor in dealing with such a complex issue and push its emotional suspense further towards a specific theater aesthetic. I learned that time is a crucial factor for the success of an international co-production because the participants need extra time to work through their cultural differences and distinct theater traditions and habits, to coalesce their stage conventions and fuse their work routines. Also, I learned that theater needs time to distance itself from the event in the reality it wants to address.

Making a theater production on the destruction of Sarajevo while the war was still going on turned out to be an enormous probing both the human and the artistic strengths of those involved. After the end of the war, with some breathing space recovered, some time distance built in, theater has more of a chance to dramatize the war time experience rather than trying to dress an open wound.

## 2

Goran must have felt the same way because he recently went back to his original script and made a new version for a British theater company. After this 1992-93 venture, a whole library of plays on the war in former Yugoslavia appeared, I probably haven't read or seen most of them, but I am aware of the plays my friends have written. The Slovenian author and director Dušan Jovanović moved the conflict into the matrix of the myth in his *Antigone* (1993), in order to create a necessary distance. He cast the conflict of Eteocles and Polyneices as a fratricide dragging on for a very long time, so long that everyone forgot the original cause of the feud and hatred got transformed into a blind, almost visceral passion with no apparent cause and purpose. I didn't see production of the Slovenian National Theater, directed by Nata Hvaler, that opened at the Wiener Festwochen but I have seen another version, the one by the KNGT/National Theater Sabotica, on its guest appearance at the Oldenburg Culturtage in 1994. The director was Ljubinka Bikić, who has for years been doing most of Dušan's plays first and as did *Antigone* as his normal privilege. With the UN sanctions and the isolations affecting Serbia, his company was almost in

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The Purse of Courage  
photo: T. Stajka

shambles by then, but there was still the motivation to perform and tour and the stubborn desire to persist, and there were some brilliant directorial solutions sketched but not worked out. While the company was performing in a cold abandoned factory hall, and changed later in the bus on which it arrived from Subotica, I was struck by this tattered ghost of the EPSE, a theatrical idea and movement I have for many years been profoundly associated with, appearing to me in Oldenburg to announce the slow death of the EPSE in the course of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, something that Ristić's subsequent political role in the Belgrade regime only sealed. In another play, written during the war, *The Purse of Courage*, Jovanović switched the gene of parabolas and turned to the inherent limitations of the theater in dealing with reality, the incapacity of the stage to catch up with the fast evolving real life events. He shows a theater company prompted to stage Brecht's *Mother Courage* by the war in Serbia. The actors are eager to find inspiration in the plight of the Roman refugees. However, their exploration of the dynamics of war and of the suffering and humiliation of the refugees brings them no guidance or inspiration because they cannot absorb and rework the refugee experience fast enough. Moreover, the refugees are not standing still either; their own experience and conditions shifting and

evolving. While the actors are in rehearsal, the refugee woman whom the principal actress sees as her inspiration and model turns into a real life Mother Courage, becomes an entrepreneur and a war profiteer amidst misery and loss, compassion and bungled humanitarian relief, develops her small business by exploiting other refugees. In every phase of their production process the actors are confronted with a reality that resists their preconceived notions and Brechtian models because it is more complex than the stage rendition and develops at a much faster pace than the production in progress can follow. Jovanović's play is a satire on the inherent shortcomings of the theater that seeks an instantaneous response to an ongoing war.

Some time later, Goran Stefanović wrote an adaptation of Euripides' *Bacchae*, trying to understand the suspension of cruelty and bursting out of violence that takes hold of collectives and readers them blind, making them delirious. Again with Chris Torch and thanks to his iridescence and production abilities, the play was done as a co-production of the Macedonian and Macedonian-Albanian actors and directed by the Croatian director Branko Bošević. It took a Swedish (actually American) producer to bridge the gap of silence and mistrust that has been marking Skopje for years, splitting its theater and artistic circles in self-enclosed ethnic and

linguistic communities. Today, the production seems as an omen of the dangers that have escalated with the recent inflow of the Kosovar Albanian refugees into Macedonia. In another play, *Gospodinija*, Stefanović dealt with the war's aftermath, regarding the war victims, perpetrators and bystanders, the profiteers and incidental participants on a ship turned into a floating casino. Seeing this play in Stockholm recently I could follow it in Swedish since I had read it before but the dry, timid actors of the Municipal theater could not render the passion and the fury of the play nor its grotesque eerie tone.

The Great playwright Slobodan Šnjider wrote a play in 1994, *Sokol Škri*, about the mass rapes occurring in Bosnia. Roberto Giuli staged it originally in his Theater an der Ruhe in Germany, removing it radically from its biblical metaphor by placing it in a theatrical surrounding of a circus. Nothing could be more at odds with the theme and the circumstances of the play, but paradoxically, it saved it from the excess of pathos and added to the central issues of martyrdom and redemption some grotesque tone. In this frame, the excessive and the extreme becomes tame, manageable. violence and the continuation of life balance each other in the art of the circus arena whose arbitrary, banal and exceptional base on a daily basis. The play had several productions in various countries.



**Under these extreme circumstances a performance matters less artistically and more as a form of communion, a short intensive, reinvigorating gesture for the benefit of the community, which is in turn rebuilt, recomposed and strengthened by the sense of solidarity and common values, united in suffering but also in the desire to resist**



Bachchonka, photo by R. Gamilov

3  
Among foreign playwrights responding to the war, I know of Ton Westerbeek and Guus Vleugel, a Dutch authorial tandem whose *Srebrenica* (1996) jumped on the bandwagon of the catastrophe and used the infamous toponym, inextricably linked in the Dutch public opinion with the humiliation of a battalion which failed to protect the UN safe zone and did not prevent the slaughter of several thousand men after this small town was captured in the summer of 1995 by the Bosnian Serb troops. The authors used the name with an oxymoron ring to sketch an image of provincial torpor, ignorance and prejudice behind a traumatic event. Their target was the home front, not the one in Bosnia. They are a side-show in this account of lessons drawn from my theater friendships.

Reflecting on the strategies that enable the theater to encounter war in an effective way I still wonder how come such a powerful response came from a Dutch author and director of theater for children, Ad de Boont - who in the course of years also became a dear friend. In 1993, during the worst phase of the war in Bosnia, he wrote and staged a play, *Mirad, a Youngster from Srebrenic*, in his company theater Wiederga. The play caught on quickly; several Dutch companies produced it simultaneously in order to bring to as many children as possible an idea of the brutalities

of war and of a child caught in them. More than 20 translations were made and in the subsequent years more than 60 professional productions in Europe, North America and Australia followed. There were also Dutch, Hungarian and British television adaptations. De Boont found a theatrical modus to deal with the complexity of the events, with violence permeating them and with cultural specificities involved, in such a manner that they become comprehensive even to the eight-year old! He deployed minimalist dramatic and theatrical means, to limit the action to two actors and give it a retrospective point of view, to run it as a reconstruction made of two complementary narratives, interviews with the third, Mirad's. In fact, Mirad, a Bosnian youngster, does not appear in person in part I at all, his plight in retail and re-enacted by two actors who impersonate his uncle and aunt who relay in turn their own traumatic experiences. They also lend their voices to Mirad's tale that comes through only in the form of his diary entries and letters. Reduction, distance and indirect type of discourse serve the purpose to cool, as it were, the hot material of a family dispersed and killed, martyred and exiled. In part II, written and staged some months later, the same means and same reductionist techniques are used. Mirad and his mother are the two characters assigned to the two actors who, just as in the first part, lend their voices

to the other supporting characters involved. Here, mother's and son's narratives complement each other and by running parallel, complete the sequence of events, they mutually reinforce their capacity to think beyond the past and envisage a condition after the war. The entire play oscillates between the past with its traumas, its myths and negative experiences, and the future that must be disengaged from the past as much as from the brutality of the present. Since some essential childhood icons - loss of parents, home, friends - stand in the center, the war becomes understandable for the kids and the adults, not as a distant catastrophe but as a wild sequence of events that can be triggered off amongst most civil circumstances. Mirad plastically shows the reshaping of the personality through the tumultuous breakdown of normal social life (neighbors become benchmarks, boys killed, closest ones victim) and maps out the path from destructive emotions to understanding and reflection. And it clarifies the identity of a refugee beyond the stereotypes of an intruding, threatening other or just a hopeless amble, propagated by reactionary politics and media. While television clips and front page photos in the papers bring testifying or disgusting images of violence be it Sarajevo, Grozny or Marosvár, as some fatality one can avoid by not looking at De Boont's play confirms theater's ability to

induce reflection and to broaden experience, to offer an emotional and cognitive linkage with the misfortune to bring us to the threshold of the tragic experience we are capable of sharing as our own.

4

In the meantime, Haris Falovic proved that his instinct was right. After sneaking into Sarajevo as a lonely returnee on New Year's Eve 1993 while as many of his fellow Sarajevoans were attempting to escape, he quickly found his role within the trying circumstances: instead of rehearsing with an international cast and performing to audiences across Europe in a production about the war in Sarajevo, he had an urge to create theater in Sarajevo with his colleagues and students, for Sarajevoans, as a form of spiritual resistance and moral encouragement. In the furious tempo, he organized concerts, film screenings and performances, hosted foreign artists who dared to come to the city to perform. He was working with Susan Sontag when she came to rehearse *Waiting for Godot* in 1993, under candle-light, with actors tiring quickly due to malnutrition and cold. Afterwards, Haris established a film festival, created his own company, and made new productions. In the cellars of half-ruined buildings, during daytime, without any heat, performances were staged and given, often lit by candles or battery lamps, and always attended beyond capacity by the exhausted, hungry and despairing and yet admiring and passionate audiences. On several visits to Amsterdam, during the war and afterwards, Haris told me how the situation of siege and non-stop danger festered self-pity rather than panic and desperation, how one achieves almost concentration and increased speed of doing things under duress and with practically no resources. I learned also that under these extreme circumstances a performance matters less artistically and more as a form of communion, a short intensive, revivifying gesture for the benefit of the community, which is in turn rebuilt, recuperated and strengthened by the sense of solidarity and common values, united in suffering but also in the desire to resist. That in a besieged city theater was one of the very few functioning institutions of the civil society, based on courage, imagination and determination of just a few people who by getting together to make theater produced an extra energy and shared it with their fellow citizens. After the war, someone counted that more than one hundred productions were made in Bosnia and Herzegovina between April 1992 and the Dayton agreement, signed at the end of 1995. Some were made by the amateurs, some by the professionals, some mixed both and they were made in several cities, some of which in the pre-war time never had much of theater life.

Haris reached out to his pre-war passion, classic Japanese theater, and staged some Noh drama. One day someone brought him a novel by Paul Auster, which some correspondent left behind saying that this is a novel about what has been happening in Sarajevo. Reading *In the Country of Last Things*, Haris realized that Auster anticipated the breakdown of Sarajevo, the polarization of normalcy and decided to make a stage adaptation. In the summer of 1994 he left the city temporarily with his company as the invitation of Peter Brook and his International Center for Theater Research to perform in Paris and around Europe with these two productions. Everywhere they were received with respect and appreciation, with special warmth of theater professionals. Yet I felt that these productions with their strong realistic component never could have so strong meaning and impact on the audiences living in peace as they have had on the people in Sarajevo under the siege. They were taken out of the context in which they were created, that prompted them and made them necessary there, while abroad they were a slightly different, a bit special, almost a bit exotic feature in the rich and diversified theater programming of any large European city.

In the spring of 1995 Haris and his company were stranded in London where Vanessa Redgrave invited them to perform in the Riverside studios. The Sarajevo airport was closed after some new war escalation, they refused to play, moreover felt they cannot play. Haris and his company, all 16 of them, from teenagers to the 76 year old actress Ires Faslović, were brought to Amsterdam and were hosted here, in various people's homes while the holiday season was on. Later, all were together in one house put at their disposal. But the company, created under special conditions of the war, could not be sustained in the peaceful conditions and the exile could not give its members the energy and concentration they had at home. Some members went back to Sarajevo after Bayonet, some left for other countries to join their refugee families. Haris made another production with a few of them and some Dutch musicians and returned to Sarajevo with it. That was his last theater act.

After that summer 1996, Haris was dividing his time between Amsterdam and Sarajevo, but was gradually spending more and more time in Sarajevo and only passing through Amsterdam. Theater became distant and alien to him, he turned himself publishing books and magazines, then making a documentary film, he left the festival he ran in Sarajevo to see younger colleagues and at some point I noticed he was considering himself a former theater director. For someone who was so passionately immersed in the theater and who was known even before the war for his fanatic

working rhythm and long intensive rehearsals it was a strange change of heart. Slowly, through many conversations, I understood that having reached some far out ends, some pinnacle of theater making in most extreme conditions, Haris could not imagine returning to theater directing as merely a profession, a job, a regular artistic pursuit, going from one play to another, stacking premieres, tours and prizes one on top of another. After the exceptional period when theater mattered so much to him and his collaborators and especially to his Sarajevo public, theater as a civilian business at war lost all attraction, all appeal for him.

5

Now, with the most recent outbreak of war on the Balkans, the question what the theater can do is being posed again. I feel more reserved and more sceptical than in 1992. One cannot make theater in Sarajevo now as it was possible to do it in Sarajevo during the siege. It would be possible to do theater in the refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania with the aim of helping the people to overcome their traumatic experiences and regain a sense of the future. It is difficult both in terms of logistics and psychology but certainly possible. Again, I have to mention Ad de Bont who a few years ago created a production *Bornit* and performed it in the camps housing the asylum seekers in the Netherlands. It was a sad and funny production, done in several languages, about the past and about the difficulties of adjustment and about uncertainty these people face now. In all the camps, the production was tremendously appreciated, people were very happy that someone recognized their issues, their pain and has addressed it directly. As a consequence, De Bont's company did another production last year, focused more on the future of the refugees, *On Anticor*, and again succeeded in performing it in the refugee circuits, coming unannounced to the camp, setting the show up with simple means, making music, attracting the children first, then women, then men, grouping them around and giving them a quick sense of recognition through laughter. It always worked. But what do you do as a theater professional in your own surrounding, is the question. One could perhaps pull an old play and stage it as a response. So many of the ancient Greek tragedies would do. The Trojan Women by Euripides, for instance, inspired in my memory in Andrić Seban's 1993 production that conveyed a tragic experience of defeat, loss and forced exile. I have been re-experiencing in the last weeks watching the flow of Albanian refugees from Kosovo. On a recent visit to New York I saw it is being brought back to La Mama where it originated. Joshua Sobol's *Sheets* comes to my mind too. But I discard the idea fearing trivializing analogies



Bernd Ulrich

with the holocaust, refusing to slide in the rhetorical figures politicians nowadays project talking about genocide, Hitler, March and Chamberlain. Too many images of the past conflicts and wars cloud the contemporary imagination facing the most recent Balkans quagmire. Or should it be Salacov's *Le rove et route*, where wild pugnacious rampage through Renaissance Florence, burning paintings, mirrors, jewels, and cards as objects of vanity, their fanaticism inspired by the fine and brimstone preaching of Savonarola? Salacov comes close to contemporary manifestations of a fundamentalist faith, invoking Taliban terror in Kabul more than the parochiality plunder and terror in Kosovo. Better than Mausel's Lorenzaccio squaring tyrannicide with farcical mediocritiy, something to reflect NATO's desire to eliminate Milosevic without taking too many risks. Even *The Massacre at Rava* (publ. 1994), the forgotten play of Christopher Marlowe, comes to my mind. Written as a relatively fresh response to the systematic slaughter of the Huguenots on the night of St. Bartholomew, with the Duke of Guise as a typical Elizabethan villain, this cardboard tragedy - some poetic passages notwithstanding - appears as an early precursor of the genre popularised by Saturday Night Massacre and similar satirising horror films. Snapping in my library I could probably come up with more plays, each of them inadequate for some reason, too remote or too narrow for the situation we are facing. Those inside the conflict zone, in Belgrade for instance, could reach for Euripides, or better Aristophanes, the deriding and the mocking commentaries

of the prolonged folly of the Peloponnesian war that went on for 25 years bringing utter ruin to Athens. And Shakespeare's catastrophic imagination is broad enough to cover any misfortune. Just a few weeks before the NATO bombing started, a Belgrade theater staged an adaptation of Agatha Christie's *Le Grand Gatsby*, this cool, meticulous record of kids needlessly training themselves to match the cruelty of the engulfing war. It probably works in Belgrade under the daily bombardments and could work in Skopje and Tirana as well. But here? What theater adventure, what gesture makes sense? That is what my British friend asks.

The more patient and wiser theater makers would probably be willing to wait, to build some distance through time and rely on theater's proven ability to function as an instrument in the re-enforcement and reconsideration of cultural memory. To those too impatient to wait so long, to those theater students I recently spoke in Utrecht who wanted to do something now, to the colleagues who think I must have a ready made answer because I am in theater and I happen to come from the Balkans, I tend to say: don't try to re-stage the war, it is too complex and too gruesome and thank god, it is at some safe distance even if television makes it explode in our living rooms every evening. Deal rather with the media coverage of the war that is so ubiquitous, dramatise and run through a gamut of genres and styles the avalanche of war reports, the endless parade of television pantomime, the solemn statements of the politicians and the daily briefings of the military

spokesmen, the voyeuristic exploitation of human misery and humiliation, the jerking of emotions, the barrage of lies and half-truths, the twisting of facts, the upstaging of some issues and events and the downplaying of some others.

That is what Karl Kraus did during World War One and afterwards in his mega-play *Die letzte Tage der Menschheit*. Start, for instance, with this comic drama of hundreds of scenes, take it one by one every day or week and you'll have plenty of material to keep you busy for the months to come. Probe the fresh media footage, newspaper articles and commentaries by bouncing them off against Kraus' grotesque exploitation of bellicose propaganda and jingoism. Theater is all probability cannot stop war nor correct injustice but can show how power and might lose the firm moral ground, how fantasies of omnipotence cause blindness, how supposed winners turn into losers once their triumphant phases start to ring hollow. Fortunes and Shakespeare as assumed theater professionals knew in their best moments how to use these powers of the theater, but today's theater maker seeking to articulate promptly a theater response to the war should better start his apprenticeship with a more contemporary master such as Karl Kraus. Well before radio, television and the Internet, he understood that modern warfare is being waged at the home front with the media as primary weapon.

*Berger Klein is the Director of Theater Instituut Nederland and professor of the University of Amsterdam. He lived in Belgrade until 1992.*



# Debalkanization of the Balkans

MERJANA POPOVIC



The issue and the problems of the Balkans have been raised over the centuries by military strategists, historians and politicians, and more rarely, by anthropologists, culture and other relevant theorists. Whoever was tackling the problem, it has been handled as if Pandora's box were being opened, with either caution, vigilance or weapons, with limited interest and unlimited pretensions. It is symptomatic that this problematic issue has always been addressed more out of self-interest rather than an interest in it, more often without respect and compromise and more seldom with a true scholarly motivation and an extensive approach. On the other hand, intellectual practice in the Balkans itself has demonstrated over the centuries its ingenuity in covering and suppressing facts, its tardiness in reacting to historical injustice and intellectual misconceptions, as well as late reactions, all the more parlorlike and sensational for it. Nowhere has mentality played such a grotesque role in determining the fate of a region as in the Balkans. The history has but played with it.

After continuity and memory have been lost, historical discontinuity and theoretical vacuum encountered, mentality remains nothing but a muddy well of being, as such, an obstacle to the development of an authentic culture and sustainable civilization in the Balkans. Russian thinkers blazed the trail for a merciless fight against mentality, supported by

written few in number and still anonymous in the Balkans.

Ethnocentrism, anachronism, mythomania, maximism, arrested past, grotesque haughtiness and depicted humility, populism, Europeanism, spiritual allegiance, idolatry, characteristic cultural exclusiveness, unculturedness of the Eastern middle having no notion of chivalry, tempering passions and disciplining courage as well as the pagan experience of history itself, oscillating both on the individual and collective level between racism and destruction, heaven and apocalypse, are the dominant features showing the lack of culture and civilization that could, at least conditionally, be named (the civilization of) the Balkans.

Reveries are the recesses in history and veins in theory claiming that this overstrained vitality of homo balkanicus and his heterogeneous social milieu are his gift, an unused, unsustainable and, very often, suppressed spiritual potential. Except for the thinkers of the Mediterranean cultural circle of mainly Catholic religion, characterized by their predominant trust in their own tradition and spiritual potential, referring partially to the "Balkan people living on the margins of the Balkans" - an average homo balkanicus has not acquired solid self-confidence and trust of his own surroundings. Consequently, he was and still is a perpetuator and a victim of his incomplete and "chronically acute" geopolitical position.

Therefore, for us, here and today, the pre-history of the problem equals the problem as it is today. The problem itself has not developed over time, it has grown instead, and so has the sediment of incidental, arbitrary and pseudo - scientific concepts, of prejudices, those of others and its own, historic self delusions, imposed political stereotypes... What is particularly affecting a vicious and multidisciplinary approach to the Balkans issue, all the more pressing for it, is the fact that the Balkans itself has first become a problem for others and then for itself. The Balkans, as an hypermorphed outgrowth on the European tissue, shows signs of being too elusive for the scientific - historical terminology and methodology of the 20th century as well as for the political mind of an average European. Not willing to underestimate the achievements of the official studies on the Balkans, there still prevails the impression that among scientific-theoretical digressions, exotic and partial treatments and colored geopolitical studies of the Balkans, there remains a wide open space that must inevitably be fulfilled by the Balkan people themselves, i.e. the peoples of the Balkans, through a radically modified theory and practice that must finally ask itself the following question: why does living in the Balkans mean being a prisoner of its own

resistance? Triumphalism, by which we most often mean the declarative refusal to accept our origin, as a rule, is nothing but a well-concealed fear of the archetypal, the call-like, the unarticulated, the inherited, the fear of our comprehension that we, though imperialized, are still alive in the Balkans, and "inevitably" lost to Europe?

Hence, unless it starts searching for its foundations and support in itself, the Balkans at the end of the 20th century could be left over to its own agony and nightmare, denigrated by charges for jeopardizing peace and stability of the world as well as qualified such as: Pandora's box, a Twilight Zone, a Powder Egg, the Province of the World, Eastern Despotism...

Therefore, regardless of how burdening it might be, the Balkans is more a matter of choice than of destiny. The idea of Dechristianization of the Balkans is neither a way nor a method of its abandonment, but rather the overcoming of the Balkan chaos syndrome, making us subordinate to those social diseases that, as a rule, are raging in the peripheral and semi-peripheral regions of the world order.

Neither has the Balkans created anything obliging others; nor have others imposed over it anything obliging it. The identity drama of numerous peoples living in this territory, surviving for centuries with undiminished rage has made this territory permanently contaminated with imposed cultural and political patterns. However, the Balkans was not so much usurped by imperial dreams of the East and the West, as by the militant national fever that has transformed the abundance of ethical and religious differences into a hell of hatred and intolerance.

No empire, system, or ideology, however strongly supported or disputed in the Balkans, has managed to impose upon and permanently dominate the territory of its domination. Mass has been swept away and rooted out, with the same nest with which they had been adopted and implemented. With the intensity of natural disasters the energy swooped down on every single attempt at rooting in, defining, shaping... except for the fact that the energy consumption in both cases equalled the quantity of energy used by people with the developed sense of evolution and graduality for making significant and identifiable traces in the history of civilization.

The final outcome of this centuries long process is something that could paradoxically be named - the energy of inhibition - rather than the energy of destruction or the energy of creation. As such, it is a derive recognizable to even those who live on and off it. It is this insight that may serve as a new beginning of rejecting any burden in a new approach and a new comprehension of the Balkans. It is

## Since culture thrives on differences and restores itself from the untamable and the inarticulate, the Balkans, as the cradle of differences, could be its privileged field of spiritual affluence and the source of restoring energy for the 21st century

worth observing, though, that the Balkans, as any other secret, opens itself only to those living in it. Therefore, the motto is - I am not searching, but finding! - that we are going to reach for the furthest, where we can meet our demands and demands of one another? If it is honest, authentic and self-critical enough, this new beginning in the comprehension of the Balkans could also be emancipating. Knowing the Balkans is not enough. One needs to understand it! The Balkans is not to be explained. It is happening to us (unfortunately, more often as a political mishmash, than as a cultural provocation).

What the Balkans uses to resist history and every attempt at interpreting is the surplus of uncontaminated or wrongly manifested energy for which there is good reason to suppose that to the same extent to which it has been the factor deranging the European and world order, it can also be its self-renewing power. Namely, in the twilight of the 20th century, we witness considerable decrease of energy resources, fatigue of civilization, entropy, essential motionlessness of the system, inertia. How and where is the wheel of history to be kickstarted again thus avoiding the agony of "the end" if not in the place where it is spinning with undiminished intensity. That is, in the Balkans! Resistant, questioning, and observe manifested in the Balkans' resisting globalizing processes in science, technology, politics and culture not only postpone putting an end to the great civilization projects, but also introduce again the dynamics, change, difference... as a motivational base of existence. The Balkans, even if it be in the negative context, serves well to remind one that order, structure, style, form, convention... are the categories reached by every serious culture, thus simultaneously reaching an end.

Therefore, not a small intellectual effort is needed to move away from the political con-

text and prisms, imposed under the circumstances, for observing the Balkans, so as to, by adding other knowledge and experience, manage to break away from deeply set and confirmed futile interpretations, that, in this century at least, have contributed more to the initiating and ravaging the chaos of the Balkans than to its taming. It hardly needs to be pointed out that the benefit from the case shown was negligible in comparison with the fact that the peoples of the Balkan have once more in this century paid too high a price for their historic immaturity, putting to test, thoughtlessly again, the new world order and its advocates over its pretensions.

Bearing in mind that, up to now, politics and history have been the privileged models of interpreting the Balkans, it may be concluded that a thorough, unconventional, personal, creative, comparative and intercultural dimension of the problem would be a revelation in itself, maybe even a more appropriate strategy for the problem that, due to too restrictive a treatment, permanently and chronically evades political analysis, strategists, negotiators and mediators...

It has been observed that even in the period of greatest peace, silence or creative enthusiasm, "roaring of underground volcanoes" may be heard and the scent of soil smelled speaking the language of cults and rituals.... That is why culture is the only resonant body authentically and genuinely ensuring a dialogue of tradition and modernity, the East and the West, an individual and a society... Noise and fury accompanying that dialogue have resulted in currencies in derangement and chaos in which forms and patterns are lost, the factual and the seemingly melted, experiences blurred and words drowned, the dialogue itself transforming into a deafening conflict of civilizations and a bloody feast of Balkan ethnoreligious circles.

Striving to provide conditions for a cultural dialogue, we may encounter a new face of the Balkans, even if it is wild and subversive, but certainly more expressive, challenging and complex. Since culture thrives on differences and restores itself from the untamable and the inarticulate, the Balkans, as the cradle of differences, could be its privileged field of spiritual affluence and the source of restoring energy for the 21st century. It could be beneficial for the Balkans to culturally re-evaluate its differences as is to protect itself from itself. The only strategy adequate to the Balkans is the one we can understand and live with directing the huge amount of historically unmeasured energy along the roads of culture and creation. For the time being, no roads in the Balkans are more passable.

Milena Popović is a philosopher from Podgorica.

Once, whenever, Germany ceased to exist on the Eastern front. After that, East Germany arose behind a wall. It was called the German Democratic Republic. The citizens of the German Democratic Republic received small packages from their sympathetic blood relatives from the Federal Republic of Germany, until they had learned how to get candles alight, unfold the banners and enter a warehouse hand in hand. Germany gained back the fourth cardinal point. The fourth cardinal point gained back its homeland. Everyone stood by, clapping hands. Everyone wanted everything. A people coming together through a provisory hole, but a people who don't know what to make of it. These has never been an East Germany, if West Germany were to survive as Germany.

On St. Martin's Day, children go through the streets carrying their self-made Chinese lanterns. On St. Martin's Day, the children in Altenburg, Thuringia, walk the streets with their Chinese lanterns that nobody can see. Not a lantern is alight. Not a light. Not a candle. Nothing at all. Even in the windows there is no electricity, no light. An opening night at the theatre. All the energy reserved for an audience of hundred. In the townhall basement you can see a lot and you can order kangaroo meat. The staff explain it's tough and dried. Nobody orders kangaroo meat. Ingo Schulze writes Simple Stories from Altenburg and everyone is happy that the East is still being preserved in literature, the cultural domain. The West Germans (the West Germans come from the West, the South and the North) has discovered a new species: the East Germans (comes from the East exclusively). The West German does not understand him, but knows that he knows more and so he shows the East German which way to go. The West German feels ashamed for the East German as long as this does not disturb his grand, his property and his power; therefore the West German does not acknowledge the East German. There has never been an East Germany. If anybody still loves them or thinks that way, it's their own fault. An East German who wanted to get to the West Germany was infatuated. But every infatuation becomes a routine of the unsatisfied. So, there is an East German, who is again a West German, that is to say a German, and there is an East German, who persists in being himself, who therefore isn't because he doesn't own a country, because he has never owned one, because it has been just a conditional point.

From a purely human point of view, Germany comes behind Berlin. From the point of view of Berlin, the citizens of the ex-GDR are seen as Tatars. The liberal thought, the handbook of political correctness demands INTEGRATION.

INTEGRATION is a very promising word when you look it up in a foreign words dictionary.

# On the disappearance of East Germany

True Stories

There is an East German, who is again a West German, that is to say a German, and there is an East German, who persists in being himself, who therefore isn't because he doesn't own a country, because he has never owned one, because it has been just a cardinal point



Maria Przyjemka: *Zielot*, 1995

INTEGRATION as part of a democratic system subject to the leitmotif of global capitalism means that there are those who know how that what is to be accepted functions, if one wishes to participate. A German is good at recognizing this, regardless of the leading figure. It matches his mentality, the request that the world be open to him, that there are no more cardinal points because it all belongs to him. From a purely human point of view, everyone agrees that fungibility is the best way to reach a stable future. From a purely human point of view everyone believes that one and one equals one.

This is not about the East approaching the West. It's about the West approaching the East. The Eastern front. Everyone agreed Germany was a divided country. Thus they accepted that at some point the day of the unification would come. The GDR - a makeshift solution. Nobody ever believed the FRG could be a makeshift solution. The East has lost a territory it had never possessed. The Eastern front is in sight again and is approaching the East. One Germany is allowed to participate in the setting up of the world police. Not two Germanies. Germany is again capable of strike and defence - again it is the way it should be: a border post that determines the borderlines. If East Germany can melt away into West Germany, then why shouldn't the rest of the Eastern block join Europe, which would be called a financial and military power. The world police together with the Big Brother. Because there has never been an East Germany, these isn't going to be any East anymore.

It's the same as with television. In the evening, people want to be entertained for the day was shitty enough. So, one sits down in peace and quiet and makes everybody else responsible for what he himself is unable to bring about. Surrender. Beer can. One would rather capitulate in the street with a beer can and feeling sorry for oneself. One would rather disappear. One would rather one hadn't been there in the first place. But it's a mistake because we're all, without exception partaken, at Kosovo and anywhere else. One with a six-pack on a street in East Germany - could be anyone. Two with a six-pack on a street in East Germany - are either two visitors from West Germany, or two from East Germany on their way home. A people is not a people. Not here.

Kim Stagliar is a playwright from Berlin

Translated from the German by *Die Zeit*

# Still life

RICHARD SWARTZ

Vassilij tells me that there is a church in Rome with three paintings by Caravaggio, which for centuries have been illuminated only by the sun, and that he has always dreamed of seeing them.

The sunlight that falls through the windows of the church is supposed to give the paintings all the light they need. The artist painted them where they hang; every color was first mixed and attuned to the sunlight from outside before it touched the canvas, and when Vassilij finally gets to Rome and Kiev, poorer than all of the cats of Rome put together, he finds that church.

But then it turns out that the sun has been replaced by a machine. If you put five hundred or maybe five thousand lire in it, the three paintings by Caravaggio will be illuminated for two minutes by a spotlight, and in four languages the machine tells the visitor what he is looking at. With the help of a tape player and artificial light one can do without the sun that even in Rome is not always dependable, and in fact the day that Vassilij visits the church, the sun is showing no consideration for art: it has hidden behind some Roman clouds.

The sky is usher gray; not the faintest glimmer of sunlight falls through the church windows.

Since Vassilij is convinced that this spotlight is not the light in which the artist once painted his pictures, and that these two minutes of electric instead of natural light actually destroy rather than illuminate Caravaggio's canvases, he despairs.

It is his only day in Rome. Every second is precious here, but not precisely in the way he had imagined; he can hardly afford the lire for the machine. Will he ever return to Rome? While tourists in shorts linger inside the church to escape from the heat outside, he flees. But before he flees, he catches a glimpse of the sweat running over the tourists' half-naked bodies, sweat that will later cool and then penetrate bone and marrow as a new and uncomfortable cold that soon drives them, too, from the church. It is more comfortable out there despite everything, especially since clouds cover the sun whose light has fallen in through the windows for centuries to illuminate Caravaggio's paintings, all three of them, and the machine keeps grinding on in there in its four languages until dusk falls and Caravaggio is swallowed entirely by darkness.

Maybe the tourists in shorts will remember Caravaggio as a place where they were cold, and Vassilij tells me that one cannot view Caravaggio like that, least of all three paintings at once, not in a spotlight when the sun was intended to be the only permitted

illumination. Only nature's own path from darkness through light and then back to darkness makes the viewing possible that was conceived by the artist himself for that space in the church, says Vassilij, and I forgot to ask him if he had five hundred (or was it five thousand) lira for the machine, or if he had to work for a Japanese or German to stick money into it.

I don't tell him about the Loreto church in my old neighbourhood in Paris, either. Time has become so precious in that church that a special altar has been erected where the visitor can light a candle and ask God for forgiveness that he cannot stay in the church long enough to pray properly; a candle like that costs two, or maybe five, francs.

Caravaggio's paintings can at least count on cost-free sunlight now and then, but that is no comfort to us, since it is not likely that Vassilij will ever see Rome again.

I feel sorry about both the art and Vassilij. Tourists in shorts have money instead of time; Vassilij on the other hand has no money, but as much time as it takes to stand in line for milk or toilet paper or to wait for the eight stamp in a ministry back home in Kiev. In Rome, time is his only resource. Instead of money in his pocket, he has plenty of time, but Rome plays him a nasty trick, and I wish that the Eternal City had not felt it necessary to steal from him his one and only asset, giving it back in the form of ever-spared and expensive segments of time just two minutes long; I wish it for Vassilij's sake and for the sake of art.

Of course I cannot compete with Caravaggio. I can only help my friend with art, in an image of my own making: on my next empty sheet of paper I am planning to set down Vassilij alone in front of Caravaggio's three paintings, at the most I will place an apple and a penknife next to him on the pew. When the last tourist in shorts has left the church, I will shut the door and lock Vassilij in. He can then sit alone in there throughout the night, in the dark, instead of having to stand in line at home in Kiev.

I will have him sit there the whole night. And just at dawn a hint of light will seep through the church windows, the very first morning light.

As I have imagined it, this light will dissolve his waiting as if it were a morning mist, and then it will reach Caravaggio's paintings, too, so that gradually at first, one by one, they become visible. The sunlight itself will paint them out of darkness as it once, with the help of the artist, painted them onto the canvases.

A first brush stroke comes clear in the light, then another and more and more, so that all three of Caravaggio's paintings return to the church in the same way they once entered it. That is how I have planned to cleanse them of that artificial, two-minute light, and my thought is not only to make a gift to Vassilij of this picture on the sheet of paper; my plan is also a selfish and calculating one.

I have given Vassilij an assignment. I have imagined him as performing a representative act. Invisible to the world, he will have to sit in there in the church to see what we in the West no longer see, and for this assignment I cannot use a Japanese or a German, that would be impossible, only someone from the East without a penny to his name.

He will sit there on behalf of us. And only the next evening do I plan to unlock the door and let him out, just in time for the train home to Kiev: a hungry and wonder-struck Vassilij.

*Richard Sennett is a British writer and journalist.*

## Lone Artists

TRINA BULJAN

Silence, like the surface of culture, hides the inside of the body as the inside guards the silence.

The corporeal silence of the inner regions flies the outward appearance as modernism fled the raw, living and sharp body. Modernism loves narcissistic appearance and fabricated backdrops.

But pristine pulsations, intact in the flesh of being. How as the artist bleeds on stage, peeling off the dead skin of art.

Jerzy Grotowski, Tadeusz Kantor, Andréi Tarkovsky, Mihail Janco, Andrzej Wajda, Živojin Pavlović, Anatoli Vassilenko, Eimuntas Nekrošius, Branko Brzozović, Dragomir Živadinov, Josef Nálej - their scenes blend in the night (Görlitz). At the beginning of the century, Tilde writes that the city dwellers, blinded by their concezes, are losing the cosmic feeling for art and nature, that they no longer have physical contact with the powers of the imaginary, with life and death, while the feelings they could have reached have become atrophied.

Rike had already rejected cultural subjectivity controlling young troops on the battlefield of poetry to seek the original secret, to approach in a fertile barely perceptible manner the latent content of the body (like Freud approached the latent content of dreams by stealth), hidden at

the bottom of the present, stuck into the deepest lands of wondrous sensibility.

The premodernist artist, endowed with technical adroitness and a completed form, illustrates the culture he represents and interprets the codes which precede the production of his work. Art as presentation has until recently been (erroneously) assigned to the East of Europe.

On the contrary, the artist working to free himself from the preconditions of comfortable creation, is wounded and tried by the already said. He takes off the uniform of [national?] culture for the benefit of the disturbing and unknown (Kantor), he chooses enigma and what is beyond signifying (Grotowski), he legitimises difference by means of eccentricity (Nálej). The body freed of the uniform enters the illusional and transparent realm of the senses.

Lone artist is an arbitrary term for the original artists from Eastern Europe. Their works have been interpreted as parables. Outside the sociological interest, the performances and films by the lone artist are foremost works of art inscribed in a writing simultaneously plastically persuasive and cruelly parodic. The lone artist lays bare the body of language (has the parodizing nature of Eastern European art been read precisely off that nakedness?). The surveillance of

manhood demanded a revelation of the pre-verbal origin, the chaos and violence of the void. In this wandschung of the body of language, the artist sweeps the dust off the world, his tool being his own body. The work is being created from the bones of desire.

The performance of the completed body is a synthesis in a completed language, but the lone artist does not create the body from language. He finds signs for it where everything is without sign, and the process of creation is an enormous effort of wrenching out from the obscure images of origin. Farrowing into his own flesh, he frees the pre-verbal body and the power culture fears. These violent energies are being thrown out, piled up on stage, on the screen. Such artistic signs are no longer immersed in media inertia. They assault the mind, come out of everything.

The performance is like a black hole in the fullness of the universe, a mirror of distant variety with a documentary face. The pure root of deepest inner being challenges the lone artist to cleanse reality from its own superficiality. Mental light filters out everything except the essential and only lets it in through the corporeal world.

Lone artist Kantor starts with endless interconnected life-giving sources, gathers the dust of distant bodies and lively brings them on stage. He frees the speech before the message. Scenes impense themselves like an invoked echo of a forgotten fusion, the scenic traces representing menders of reality.

Should the lone artist pay the beautiful, appearances or the quotidian any mind, the gaze declines. Raw meat means primarily exposing the obscurity of established values, those which take place outside great vital scenes, in repeated verdicts, in fatigue, in factum images, in found apparently existing meanings.

True surfaces of art are the deepest reverse side of the body-universe. They are exposed by the lone artist: the pointless documentary, the scandalous cartography of tragic lines of being and chaos, where the still unformed flesh bears the first fruits of life (Pavlović).

The act of creation is not elliptical, rather it is a hardly discernible shock. The effect of art is an irreversible event. Human body is placed in the universe forever going away by the loners. The distance creates beauty or its reverse side. Scattered traces of an inconceivable flesh are the broken mirrors of that impossibility.

Every strong work is seen as an achievement exceeding expectations, always different, as never ceasing to be spellbound by a life yet to come (the present of the European East was a Chekhanov railway station on the way towards the future which was forever coming).

What is being interpreted as asceticism in the work of directors loners is perhaps their being fatigued with the aesthetics and nebula of conceptual modernity. Fatigue is descending into the abyss of art, frowning the pulsation of death. Lone art demands a live preaesthetic emotion.

preferring body over intellect, flesh over the referential body. A tender and vigilant seismograph, the lone artist backs away from the unsaturated mental sphere to find within himself the brutal escapades of corporal depths. Figures created by these seismographs of intimacy find no referent in the quotidien language. Perhaps it was pie-

myriad breasts. As if different shoots have sprung and different voices been released from the body. He shows the inside of the abyss of flesh, a wasteland of primitive scenes.

Nadja's heads are separated from the bodies, turned towards an imaginary sky. His bodies, smudges in a fugitive space.

Goran Štefanjuk — *old and build I require... a gallery*, 1994



dosely the loners' fatigue their centers were so fascinated by.

Loners dissect the skin of appearance which hides the primitive, they trouble the surfaces of backwaters, reaching the primal layers of memory (Tarkowski).

The secret of loners is acceptance, in spite of themselves, of grossest violence. The works displays what the loner projects on his inner screen: an enlarged field of subterranean perceptions, all the way to the recorded traces of profound pathologies.

Cultural dams start to give in when the artist trespasses into the forbidden underworlds barring entrance into the old and dusty reality of human pathologies.

Breconce opens himself up to the hidden labyrinths. His world is made of bodies which new organs have been designed. Hence atavisms, tails sprouted anew; hyperfertile females with

Kantor's scenes are stopped explosions, bodies floating in absence, in an ambience of macabre buffoonery.

Grotowski draws an endless universe and his cramped rhythms, in the dimensions of some deserted island being populated by men. Bodies are clad in space. Their gaze fascinates.

What do lone artists show? That only on stage can flesh be experienced for outside the stage we do not perceive our own flesh, nor do we feel our mortality so powerfully. From the stage and the screen we are being observed by an unbearable gaze of a mortal already in the other world. He is watching us face to face. The disturbing inside and the immobile outside are joined in a single movement.

Janka Dujan is a member of the editorial board of *Pavlović*. Translated from the Croatian by Nataša Bralić

# A threat

SHOULD WE SAY THAT IN THIS CENTURY EASTERN EUROPE HAS BEEN AN EXPERIMENT WITH NO TRUTH, WE HAVE ALREADY INDICATED THAT - PERHAPS - THE VERY POSSIBILITY OF MANIFESTATION HAD BEEN ABOLISHED. THE BIOPOLITICAL EXPERIMENT, OF WHICH CONCENTRATION CAMPS, GULAGS AND ENDLESS PROCESSIONS OF REFUGEES ARE ONLY THE MOST FAMOUS TRACES, SPEAKS NO LONGER OF UNALTERABLE TRUTHS BUT IS PRIMARILY AN INDEX OF INSTANT AND CLAUSLESS DEFERRAL. THE TOPICS PRESENTED IN THE FOLLOWING THEORETICAL SNAPSHOTS FAR FROM EXHAUST THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROBLEM, BUT THROUGH THE COINCIDING OF VARIOUS SPHERES OF LIFE - THE FOUL OF COMMUNISM, ECONOMIC GLOBALISATION, CONTEMPORARY ART - THEY ANTICIPATE THE MASSIVE AND HYPERBOLICAL INDIFFERENCE OF THE PHENOMENON WHICH LITERALLY LEAVES THE ESTABLISHED INSTITUTIONS BRATHLESS, HENCE EASTERN EUROPE'S OTHER NAME - THREAT.

PIETRO MILAT

## SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

And why are we, from the 'post-Communist' Eastern European countries, the ones to assume the task of reinventing the way out of the vicious cycle of capitalism? Because we are compelled to live out and sustain the contradictions of the global capitalist New World Order at its most radical. The ideological dream of a unified Europe aims at achieving the [impossible] balance between the two components: full integration into the global market, retaining the specific national and ethnic identities. What are we getting in the post-Communist Eastern Europe is a kind of regime, diasporan realisation of this dream - in short, the worst of both worlds, unconstrained market combined with ideological fundamentalism.

The passage from really-existing Socialism to really-existing capitalism in Eastern Europe brought about a series of comic reversals of sublime democratic enthusiasm into the ridiculous.

The dignified East German crowds gathering around Protestant churches and heroically defying Stasi terror suddenly turned into vulgar consumers of bananas and cheap pornography; the civilized Czechs mobilized by the appeal of Atom and other cultural icons suddenly turned into cheap swindlers of Western tourists. The disappointment was mutual: the West, which began by idolizing the Eastern dissident movement as the reinvention of its own tired democracy, disappointedly dismisses the present post-Socialist regimes as a mixture of corrupt ex-Communist oligarchy and/or ethnic and religious fundamentalists. [...] The East, which began by idealizing the West as the model of affluent democracy, finds itself in the whirlpool of ruthless commercialization and economic colonization. So was all this worth the effort? [...]

It is clear that the pretentious crowds in the GDR, Poland and the Czechoslovakia wanted 'something else', an utopian object of impossible fulness designated by a multiplicity of names

Catrina Correia: "May it be  
them, who will kill you?", 1995

('solidarity', 'human rights', etc.), NDF what they actually got. Two reactions are possible towards this gap between expectations and reality: the best way to capture them is via reference to the well-known opposition between fool and knave. The fool is a simpleton, a court-jester who is allowed to tell the truth precisely because the 'performative power' (the socio-political efficiency) of his speech is suspended; the knave is a cynic who openly states the truth, a crook who tries to sell the open admission of his crookedness as honesty, a scoundrel who admits the need for illegitimate repression in order to maintain social stability. After the fall of Socialism, the knave is a neoconservative advocate of the free market who cruelly rejects all forms of social solidarity as counterproductive sentimentalism, while the fool is a multiculturalist 'radical' social critic who, by means of his ludic procedures destined to 'subvert' the existing order, actually serves as its supplement. With regard to Eastern Europe, a knave dismisses the 'third way' project of *Neues Forum* in ex-GDR as hopelessly outdated utopia and exorts us to accept the cruel market reality, while a fool invites that the collapse of Socialism effectively opened up a Third Way, a possibility left unexplored by the Western re-colonization of the East. [...]

When these Eastern European movements exploded in a broad mass-phenomenon, their demands for freedom and democracy (and solidarity and...) were also misperceived by Western commentators who saw them as the confirmation that the people of East also want what the people in the West already have; they automatically translated these demands into the Western liberal-democratic ratios of freedom (the multi-party representational political game over global market economy). [...] As we then condemned to the debilitating alternative of choosing between a knave or a fool, or is there a tertium datur?

(The feature is still Roaming Around - an introduction to the 150th anniversary edition of the Communist Manifesto.)

### JEAN-LUC NANCY

The gravest and most painful testimony of the modern world, the one that possibly involves all other testimonies to which this epoch must answer (by virtue of some unknown decree or necessity, for we bear witness also to the exhaustion of thinking through History), is the testimony of the dissolution, the dislocation, or the conflagration of community. Communism, as Sartre said, is the unsurpassable horizon of our time, 'and it is so in many senses - political, ideological, and strategic. But not least important among these senses is the following consideration, quite foreign to Sartre's intentions: the word "communism" stands as an emblem of the desire to discover or rediscover a place of community at once'

beyond social divisions and beyond subordination to technopolitical dominion, and thereby beyond such wasting away of liberty, of speech, or of simple happiness as comes about whenever these become subjugated to the exclusive order of privatizations; and finally, more singly and even more decisively, a place from which to surmount the unravelling that occurs with the death of each one of us - that death that, when no longer anything more than the death of the individual, carries an unbearable burden and collapses into insignificance.

More or less consciously, more or less deliberately, and more or less publicly, the word 'communism' has constituted such an emblem - which no doubt amounts to something other than a concept, and even something other than the meaning of a word. This emblem is no longer in circulation, except in a belated way for a few, for still others, though very rare nowadays, it is an emblem capable of inferring a fierce but impotent resistance to the visible collapse of what it premised. If it is no longer in circulation, this is not only because the States that claimed it have appeared, for some time now, as the agents of betrayal. The schema of betrayal, aimed at preserving an original communist party of doctrine or intention, has come to be seen as less and less tenable. Not that totalitarianism was already present, as such, in Marx.

But the schema of betrayal is seen to be unbearable in that it was the very basis of the communist ideal that ended up appearing most problematic: namely, human beings defined as producers, and fundamentally as the producers of their own essence in the form of their labor or their work. That the justice and freedom - and the equality - included in the communist idea or ideal have in effect been betrayed in so-called real-communism is something at once laden with the burden of an intolerable suffering and at the same time politically decisive. But these burdens are still perhaps only relative compared with the absolute weight that crushes or blocks all our 'horizons': there is, namely, no form of communist opposition - or let us say rather 'communitarian' opposition - that has not been or is not still profoundly subjugated to the goal of a human community: that is, to the goal of achieving a community of beings producing in essence their own essence as their work, and furthermore producing precisely this essence as community. An absolute immobility of man to man - a humanism - and of community to community - a communism - obstinately坐立不安, whatever be their merits or strengths, will forms of oppositional communism, all leftist and ultraleft models, and all models based on the workers' council. In a sense, all ventures adapting a communitarian opposition to 'real communism' have by now run their course or been abandoned, but everything continues along its way as though, beyond these ventures, it were no longer even a question of thinking about community.

Yet it is precisely the immobility of man to man, or it is man, taken absolutely, considered as the immobile being par excellence, that constitutes the stumbling block to a thinking of community. A community presupposes as having to be one of *Auncie being* presupposes that it effect, or that it must effect, as such and integrally, its own essence, which is itself the accomplishment of the essence of humanness. Consequently, economic ties, technological operations, and political fusion [into a body or under a leader] represent or rather present, expose and realize this essence necessarily in themselves. Essence is set to work in them; through them, it becomes its own work. This is what we have called 'totalitarianism', but it might be better named 'immobilism', as long as we do not restrict the term to designating certain types of societies or regimes but rather see in it the general horizon of our time, encompassing both democracies and their fragile juridical parapets.

(*The Impensive Community*)

## BORIS GROYS

The Communist art is not merely pre-modern, at the same time it is post-modern, but by no means postmodern. Modernist works of art are being revalued on the condition of Communism. Here we're not dealing with a sort of pre-modernism, but, as in the case of German National Socialism and Italian Fascism, with, so to speak, another kind of modernism.

Already the expression eastern art is decaying. Communist thought internationally, its geographical location was just a historical coincidence, a preliminary stage for global rule. Naturally, Russian art of the Soviet period demonstrates many national features. The same can be established for the art of other ex-Communist countries. And such an art is still by no means the expression of ethnic or national conditions. According to the official formula the social realist art should be national in its form, but socialist in its content. The most important thing about this art was, however, its claim to be international and universalist. To subsequently nationalise and regionalise it as eastern art would mean to overlook its most important dimension. The same universalist claim was imposed by theorists art that, let's put it this way, wanted to save the whole world from the Communist world rule claim. Consequently, the Communist art can be settled neither into time nor into space coordinates. The sole possibility to display this art adequately would be offered by a museum-like reconstruction of the Communist system so as to demonstrate the function of such an art within Communism. Such a venture would surely be fascinating and convincing, but at least on the basis of money shortage of the present recession period it seems less feasible.

What has been said so far obviously brings us to the conclusion that the eastern art in principle cannot be made museum-like. In its attempt to make eastern art, art created under Communism, museum-like, the institution of the museum finds its historical limits. It cannot afford it, so it hides its incapability by characterising eastern art as non-art. Such a characterisation is basically true. Art, preserved in museums, is by and large originally non-art that has subsequently been made museum-like. The question to be asked is not whether eastern art is a (good) art or not, but why has the institution of museum failed at its attempt to make it museum-like. [...] The reception of eastern art is another important factor that forces the institution of the museum towards its necessary transformation and redefinition. For there are no historical limits far yet another modernism. An reevaluating and re-utilisation of art in a possible post-modern future could on different conditions, in a different place and by means of other ideologies once again be relevant and demanding. Communist art will then again perhaps function less as an object of a subsequent marking of the museum-like, and much more as an early role-model for the art's unmaking of the museum-like.

(*Museum-like making of the East, in Logik der Sammlung*)

## MARINA GRŽINIĆ

There has been much talk of late about the fall of Eastern Europe. Much talk as to why, despite the early euphoria of the West, it failed to leave its mark on the map of important political, cultural and social changes (suffice it to say that in the world's biggest contemporary art and culture exhibition, *Documenta in Kassel*, where were as good as no artists coming from the region, because, according to the *Documenta* selector, there was nothing interesting to choose from!). However, contrary to the disillusionment that is projected onto the region by the western theorists, critics and intellectuals, brought about as they are to point out, by its failure to transform itself into a stable social space (thus, Eastern Europe appears to have been discovered only to be lost again), I myself am inclined to accept Žižek's interpretation who, with Lacan in mind, claims that, when speaking of Eastern Europe we have to comprehend and admit the "difference between the act as a negative gesture of saying the word *No!* and its positive effect". And if we reflect upon that primary negative gesture, that *No!* said to the Communist regime, we can grasp the true ART - "that negative gesture had greater importance than its later positivism." The *affaires* could be radicalised even further. After the fall of the Berlin wall, Eastern Europe indeed found itself in a sudden dangerous situation, it changed, as it were, into that invisible remainder, shapeless vertige of a piece of reality (it is of



Albrecht Kaindlmaier  
Feather Cannon, 1994

isn't surprising that some theorieclines, including Peter Žídek, speak of Eastern Europe as a generator of concepts in art and culture that are related to a traumatic reality, as if it had used up the potentials that its previous existence provided. It found itself in a position that can be interpreted the way Žídek interprets Gédius's position once he has completed his symbolic destiny (after he has unknowingly killed his own father and married his own mother). Gédius, once he has completed his destiny, is, according to Žídek, that individual remainder, shapeless vestige of a piece of reality; he is the immediate embodiment of what Lacan calls *plus-de-jouir*, excessive enjoyment, excess, which cannot be reduced to any symbolic idealization. "When Lacan resorts to the notion *plus-de-jouir*, he is playing with the equivocality of its meaning in French, which can be translated both as excessive enjoyment and as no more enjoyment"; so, Gédius is, once he has completed his destiny, excessively human, *plus d'homme*.<sup>1</sup> In consequence, couldn't Eastern Europe, once it has completed its destiny, be defined as *plus d'Europe orientale*. The East Europe is excessively European (just as before it had been less than European!). Therefore, Eastern Europe is reduced to an excrement. However, isn't that, viewed new through an inverted tyber optic, in the last instance a good or first prerequisite for the entire paradigmatic Eastern European construction to finally assume all the characteristics of today subjectivity. But it

is already now, in that inherently excremental position, on its way to a possibility of surfacing as a subject? As Žídek notes: "If the Cartesian subject wants to surface at the level of enunciation it has to be brought down to the 'almost nothing' of a reusable excrement at the level of enunciative contents." Maybe it is already, now it has grasped that at the level of enunciative contents it was brought down to the "almost nothing" of a reusable excrement (the exact position it occupied at the Documenta 1997). In a position of being able to surface at the level of enunciation,

(in Dialogi 2/2/98)

## DIRK BAECCKER

At least since the time of the 1989 changes, it is clear that we don't think far ahead when we describe modern economy in terms of the opposites of capitalism and socialism. Indeed are capitalism and socialism metaphors for the economy's regulatory forms that in one case stress the uncontrolled ability of the power to do it, pleases and in the other the humanization of the society. The essential discovery that has been made after the Change was that neither the *des-as-it-please* ability of the power nor the human quality of the society were much ahead. But, together with ideologies the descriptive models of society fell, too. [...]

These who actually believed in capitalism, had no chance after the Change. Those who realized in that time that before as well as after the Change, the point is economic exploitation of political regulatory mechanisms, had indeed much to learn, but at least no troubles with the rearrangements. In other words, one of the most interesting aspects of the Change from socialism to capitalism was and is that it had never occurred. Regulatory methods have been replaced. [...] The 1989 Change gives a chance to grasp, from the point of view of the so called transformation of socialism into capitalism, that the German and European production crisis is at the same time description crisis. Both in socialism and capitalism we have worked out our own descriptions of the economy and thanks to new economic and sociological circumstances we gradually start comprehending that they have little in common with the economy's reproduction methods. At the moment the Change gives a chance to the insufficiencies of descriptions, that have been adjusted to the circumstances, to contribute to the understanding of the lost latitude of economic developments.

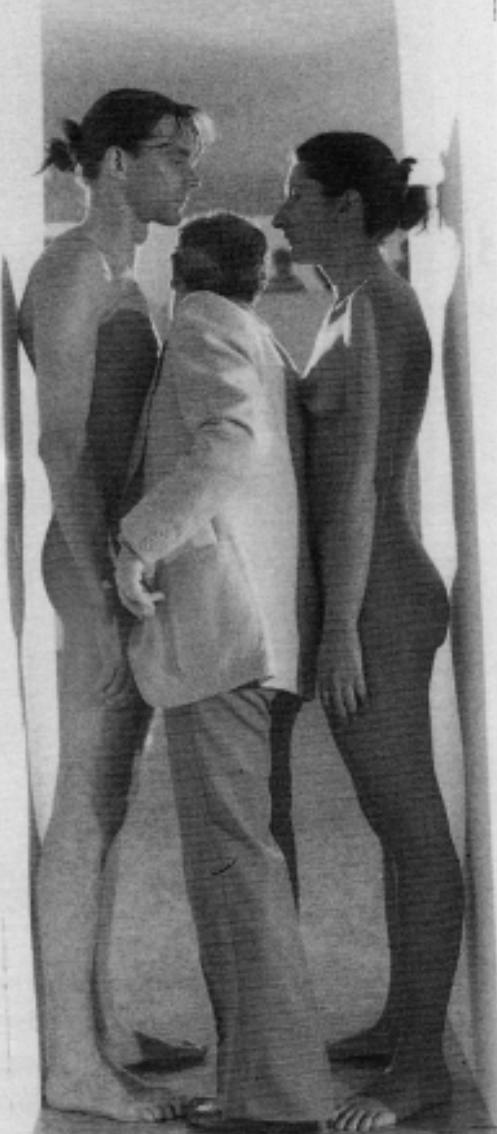
(Gold und Unternehmertum, in: Universitas 5/97, pp. 439-447)

Chosen by Pietro Milti & Tomislav Apsik  
Translated from the German by De-Cosk

# Trace of authenticity

VALENTINA VALENTINI

Ulay/Wim Wenders  
Depository LLC, 1977



The history of the theater in Central and Eastern Europe in the second half of the 20th century, is almost unknown in Italian theater culture, except for the theories and authors who are famous in the West as well, and a part of the artistic and theatrical legacy of our century: Grotowski, Kantor, Müller, Vailliev, Lyubimov... But the history of the theater is not merely the sum total of individual personalities who emerge from it, and most importantly, what is still left, tentatively reconstructed, is the history of possible variations between Western theater and that of Eastern Europe. In the assumption propensity to strengthen European cultural identity, which was the induced effect of the war in the Balkans. It is necessary to conduct a comparison of the respective legacies so as to understand, for example, whether the experiments and movements like the Performance art, Theater anthropologie, group theater, stage-theater, environmental theater, which have significantly marked the European and North American theater, have a counterpart, in differently masked forms, on the other side of the Iron curtain as well.

In 1994, the Theater Institut Nederland, headed by Dirck Klaaf, conducted a research on the theaters from the Eastern Europe - *The Dissident Stage: Critical Theater in Central and Eastern Europe 1968-1989*. In merit was having proposed a picture of a whole, comprised of directions, and having brought to light the reality of the dissident theater, as an alternative to the theater of consent, which was an emanation of the regime. From this research we are led to assume that, in different times and modes, an experimental context, common to European dissident theaters, has in spite of everything been created, that has transposed the Iron curtain, the NATO, the cold war, the anti-totalitarianism, the closure of the borders, the scarce or nonexistent circulation of information between the East and the West. This context of theater culture that belongs to the new international theater has as its common base the hypotheses according to which the aesthetic revolution and social revolution proceed in parallel and converge towards the same goal.

We can take at the significant preparations of this process two theater groups - the Living Theater, which created an interesting connection between the United States and Europe from the 1970s on, and Ernstbrecht's Spectrum Laboratory, moving in the opposite direction, from Eastern Europe towards the West. The question of direct and indirect relations between the theater from the East and the theater from the West is therefore a fascinating field of research to operate in, consisting of it, as a complex network involving numerous partic-

ipants. A director who, like Anatoly Vassiliev, has made the comparison with Europe a method underlying the production of his performances, explicitly declares the flow of models to capture and absorb: "During the first period, the Western European Theatre had an enormous influence on us - just like us everybody else in the Soviet Union - in the cultural and social context. ..." "We were mainly influenced by producers like Strahl, Brook and Stein; theaters like the Piccolo and the Berliner Ensemble; Grotowski, who became an idol for the people in the 1970s; the Cheaters of the absurd and the European Film world" (Vassiliev, 1992: 66). In another place, in East Berlin, the construction of the Wall, a protective bulwark against the western penetration, permitted, according to Heiner Müller, an experimentation less conditioned by the security of consent,

urgent need to merge with reality, the question posed by the traces of the "Eastern European masters in Western European theater", is formed as an inquiry into the theater the distinctive characteristic of which is the opposition to the institution, and operating as a research laboratory, alternative and antagonistic experience, plays for the construction of the possible world.

From the outlined general hypothesis, i.e. that there is a common ground on which the experiences of the dissident theater both in the East and in the West of Europe fed, another corollary which we have to keep in mind follows, the one according to which the influences are read as a two-way passage, as a reconstruction of a feedback, as an exchange rather than a linear one-way process.

The subject of an analysis which we find beginning with suggestions, loaded with the sentiment of the present, traversing different means of expression (theater, visual arts, film, video), running through the whole 20th century, functioning as a red thread of theoretical speculations and efficient experiments, is the idea of authenticity, as presented, elaborated and practiced in some of the fundamental theater experiences, both in the East and in the West, as a deep-seated need to renew and regenerate the theater. This idea seems to be the basis of the most vital and significant utopias and practices of the masters of Eastern theater, from Stanislavski to Müller, from the Squat Theater to Yuryi Stanišev, from Marina Abramović to Andy Warhol...

#### AGAINST FICTION

"Who can bring the renewal about?" Jerry Grotowski wondered. "The people who, dismayed at the situation of the normal theater, assume the task of creating the poor theater..." the amateur who work on the margins of the professional theater, the self-taught people who have reached the technical level which is much simpler to the one required by the dominant theater; in a word, a few madmen who have nothing to lose and who are not afraid of hard work" (Grotowski, 1970: 38). Supporting this hypothesis, Grotowski was comforted by his master, Stanislavski, who "asserted that the phases of the awakening and the renewal of the theater would occur in an amateur environment and not in the academic and skeptical professional ones" (*ibid.*).

In Stanislavski's work, theater is synonymous with crude, conventional, external imitation, while the truth is the capacity to react with impulses and desires to create the substance of motivations that guide the actor's actions on stage. From Stanislavski on, the transfer of the actor's ability (from the technical) and professional level (to master a craft)



Who Broke? (Emmendorf/Peterson, 1994)

to the ethical and existential one has had enormous importance: "We feel that an actor reaches the essence of his vocation when he commits an act of honesty, when he lays bare his own self..." Grotowski asserts. And to act with honesty means to be able to "react totally, i. e. to begin to exist. Because every day we react but half-way" (Grotowski, 1970: 143).

This way of understanding and practicing theater has become, throughout the 20th century, a legacy which many companies acquired and which has substantially changed the concepts of truth and fiction [in theater]...

Notions of political nature on the one side, and of research and formal experimentation on the other, on the part of the historical Avant-garde and the Neo Avant-garde have in the 20th century contributed to creating a tradition of thought turned to disassemble from the basis the constitution of the actor, with the objective of reaching an aesthetic dimension of being on stage. In this sense, the work with an actor goes in the direction of truth as it tends to disintegrate the psychological mechanisms, to surpass the conflicts between the self and a social role, to externalize the emotional reactions, etc.

In the history of the theater, the moments of crisis, on which utopian were fed, have been permeated by the idea that the regeneration can happen by upsetting the traditional theatrical apparatus, abolishing the separation actors/specators, stalls/stage and drawing on the social contexts outside the profession, not corrupted by the dictate of the craft.

The experiences which have emerged in political contexts (from Picasso to agit-prop and to all the experimental forms during the October Revolution in Russia), have had no need of professional guarantees, since the theater was the space of discussion, of inquiry into its own reality and identity. And the end of theater work lied in the value of the formative experience to the participants.

The companies which base the process of construction of the performance on laboratory procedures and practices (group work, method of inquiry by trial and error), verify the enormous capacity of the theater to promote the processes of self-knowledge and of knowledge of one's identity, as well its capacity to provoke feelings and drives which, outside the stage area, have no means of expression. Such laboratory practice, which distinguishes the productive modes of the most interesting contemporary theater groups, turns the theater work into a personal and collective cognitive experience and, which is even more interesting, performs a function that is proper to art (actually being ever more dignified by the current artistic production): to construct a space-time in which to exercise and live unmasked, having deconstructed the roles and automatism...

On the fourth congress of the writers of the GDR in 1958, Bertolt Brecht proposed the kind of theater capable of causing the forms of struggle to appear in the audience, through the consciousness of the social processes at work in the act, a theater which should have emerged next to the huge state theaters, made by simple citizens and not by professional actors, and which should have carried out some kind of documentation at the local sections of the party about the problems that the difficult construction of socialism raised. Helmut Müller, at the beginning of his dramatic activity, tried to put into effect the proposal of Brecht and wrote *Lohnhacker*, which was staged by an amateur company and which dealt with a true story of workers Hans Garbe, who paradoxically became the working class hero by the fact that he had betrayed the real interests of the working class in the name of the construction of socialism. The political value intervened to

## **The history of the theater is not merely the sum total of individual personalities who emerge from it, and, most importantly, what is still left entirely to reconstruct is the history of possible relations between Western and Eastern European theater**

bridge the historical separation between producers and consumers and to develop in the spectator the ability to intervene into the elaboration of the performance, taking stands towards the problems and contradictions to be solved, in a direct equation of being an actor on the theater stage and being a protagonist on the real stage (the former being the reconstruction of the latter). The socialist ideology has legitimized the disappearance of the social division between producers and consumers, even in the sphere of cultural and artistic production; for Müller, the role of the author as a specific and privileged vocation would no longer have reason to exist, and that of the actor as well. Of the non actors of a socialist state under construction, qualities quite different from the services the professional actors render in a capitalist society were required: retelling the historical truth, exemplarity,

didactic value (to point out the contradictions and try to resolve them), the ability to provoke a discussion among the spectators. The conventional parameters of the theater work gave in to other and different ones: for Brecht the didactic play should have had the efficiency to instruct primarily its performers, since the presence of the audience was not expected.

### **THRESHOLD BETWEEN THE SPONTANEOUS AND THE PREPARED**

That the reconstitution of the theater could happen outside of the theater culture itself was the widespread aesthetic principle among the North American and European Neo Avant-garde. Performance art, from *Vita Aeterna* to Bruce Nauman, from Gary Hill to *Beu Wilzer*, has consciously theorized and practices the ignorance of knowledge, techniques and competencies in disciplines belonging to a specific artistic tradition, whether theatrical or visual. Emerged from the need to lose memory in order to search for discovery of something new and hidden, this hypothesis has contributed to the spreading of an artistic tendency in which belonging to a tradition became irrelevant, as it was not necessary, consequently, to follow a specific training. Quite the contrary, the more one approached the theater work without experience, the more easily could the director mold the performer's body, imprint rhythms and tones onto his voice, without having to vanquish his resistance and destroy his acquired habits. The workshop became the spatio-temporal device in which this search for a personal and authorial grammar, without the knowledge derived from academic education, is developed in agreement with the construction of one's own world-theater. In the Eastern Europe, the search for an authentic dimension beyond the limits imposed by the art system is a necessity that is fundamental to the work of a theater group like the Squat Theaters.

The impossibility to distinguish between the performance and everyday life, the passage from fiction into reality without crossing the threshold of neither, is the necessity that moves the research of the Squat theater, the theater group working in Budapest, which has emigrated to New York in mid-70s, and which exemplifies the link between the Avant-garde of the East and that of the West, compiling a kind of consensus.

The myth of the equation of theater and life has been no less influential in the radical process of the deconstruction of the category of the actor: "To create a form of life on stage" was the idea which guided the performative activities of the Squat Theater, the aim of which was to offer the spectator not a



repetition of a performance, but an event in real time that would have the force to impose upon the existence of actors and spectators. This aim, in the performances of the Squat, was pursued in different ways, mainly by having no rehearsals, which were replaced by the discussions of the project by the collective of authors-performers, in which existential space-time coincided with the performative space-time, since they lived together in a house-theater that was at the same time also the site in which actions, not preset as to their length and development, took place. For example, in *Andy Warhol's Last Love*, interview with the passer-by, outside of the house-theater, conducted by Eva Buchwald, could not have been calculated in advance. In the New York performances of the Squat Theater "the street scenes," casual and unpredictable, but an integral part of the performance, were mixed with the scenes that were performed inside of the house-theater, and which at the same time belonged to the quotidian real life (like the scene in *Pig, Child and Fire!*, in which Eva eats dinner together with her children and then takes them to bed), and with those devised and prepared specially for the performance. "Our idea of the theater was essentially different from the so-called experimental and

Avant-garde theater. Creation of a form of life on stage excludes both the script and the description by means of stage directions." It was based on the belief that it was not necessary to acquire particular abilities as an actor and director, nor to submit oneself to the discipline of training and rehearsals, but to confide instead in the ideal element - the project - and above all in the energy and rigor developed in the execution of performance, rather than derived from formal and compositional elaboration. Since the performance had to preserve for the spectator the fragrance and authenticity of the real event, this aspect linked the Squat to the contemporary experiences of the West Coast, with that way of conceiving of the artistic practice which has spread throughout Europe with the Fluxus movement and performance art.

In Hungary, the dissidence of a group with respect to the political and cultural system was expressed in the act of withdrawal into the private - the theater-apartment, house - which actually constituted a taboo zone as regards the socialist ideology of forced collectivism, and in the transformation of the domestic and personal space in the public one open to the eyes of the spectator who entered the house-theater and penetrated a kind of

intimacy, into a place of dismissed desires and frustrations, which the regime considered a bourgeois legacy to be extirpated.

In the same year, in the artistic practice of the American Avant-garde, the staging of private discourses and actions in public, revealing of one's intimate dimension, was a process instigated by the use of electronic devices (the closed circuit TV camera), capable of transforming the personal into something that can be shared in public, with the aim of conducting a self-examination of the action in the process of creation (Vito Acconci, among many others). But unlike the North American artist, to whom the new media offered the possibility of producing a kind of "soliloquy in public," for the Squat the staging of the private as home-family-theater springs from a need for organic unity: the everyday existence and the theater existence share the same rhythms, are given as a flow, socio-aesthetic way of giving form to the events.

Paradoxically, relaxation of the Squat from Eastern Europe to New York's underground Avant-garde scene, created a麻醉化 (anesthetization) of the fundamental motives that gave life and nationhood the home-theaters, as they were assimilated into the theoretical, Avant-garde and experimental speculation. Performances like *Pig, Child and Fire!* became the exemplary models of the "theory of performance," of the chiasmography of space that caused a Copernican revolution of the new theater, both in Europe and in the United States. But if in a country under a socialist regime the private has taken the role of a constituting device of the dissident theatrical practice, in a country with a capitalist regime the social and ideological content of the system of art got particular emphasis: in their performance *Andy Warhol's Last Love*, Andy Warhol actually incarnated the symbol of art which has become a consumer good, a large edition popular commodity.

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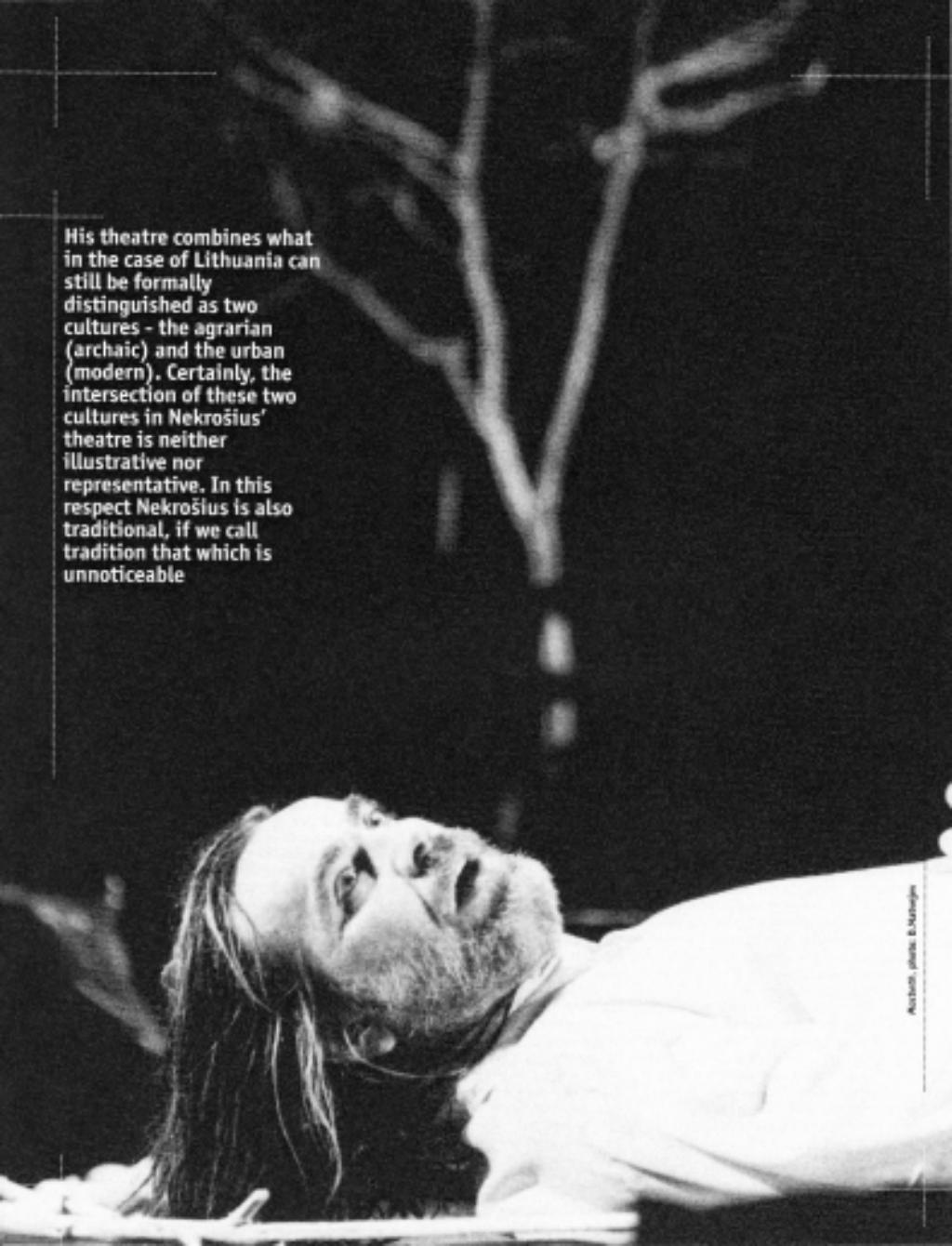
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# Theatre of Eimuntas Nekrošius and Tradition

RAMUNE MARCINKVICIUTE

As soon as you connect the terms "theatre of Nekrošius and tradition", you immediately feel that they do not make a good match. They imply something quite alien to Nekrošius' performances. In the context of Nekrošius' work, tradition seems to disappear as the distinguishing mark of his theatre. His theatre is dominated by something far more intimate - the nature of Nekrošius himself. Only when his nature is integrated into the general theatre context does it become Nekrošius' directing tradition. It still remains deeply personal and bears a prominent role of an accidie.

What tradition is represented by the ice in *Hamlet*? Geographical knowledge? Laws of nature? And the lumps of sugar in *The Square*? The tradition of Soviet prisons and the tea-drinking rituals widespread among inmates? Or the classes in *Macbeth*, a plate of soup in *The Three Sisters* that Tuzenbach furiously eats up before going to meet his death? Certainly, one can guess that this plate of soup appeared as a result of the director's



His theatre combines what in the case of Lithuania can still be formally distinguished as two cultures - the agrarian (archaic) and the urban (modern). Certainly, the intersection of these two cultures in Nekrošius' theatre is neither illustrative nor representative. In this respect Nekrošius is also traditional, if we call tradition that which is unnoticeable

**Theatre is the art form most accessible both to the artist and the audience. It is an art form that doesn't require special training. Only those who work in the theatre find it difficult. Looking from aside, it is all lightness and fiction...**



Photo: M. Pliška / photo: A. Žižulkis

close reading of Chekhov's biography containing an episode when the great Russian dramatist suddenly asked for a glass of champagne and, having drunk it to the bottom, departed this life. And then we could start thinking that a glass of fizzy drink does not belong to Nekrolytis' system of signs, while the plate of soup does. If we continue to search for the genesis of the plate from *The Three Sisters*, we will get convinced that it suits the director, but not because, let's say, it looks attractive on stage, but because a morsel of hot soup genetically means more to a farmer's son than a special kind of grape wine from France. A subtle expert in Chekhov's plays and Stanislavski's impersonations would never have Tuzenbach eat a plate of soup. If Nekrolytis asked this expert to feed and warm the barn up before his death, the latter would pour a cup of tea for him at the very most. Set too hot. And, certainly, into a fragile china cup. We could proceed at length with similar questions about the origin of images in Nekrolytis' theatre, and easily prove that the director belongs to the one and only tradition - that of his own nature. And, certainly, his descent. It has already become a norm for him, particularly when speaking to foreigners, to mention his father's origins. But this is the truth. Nekrolytis was not born in a big city, not even in a small town, but in a village of just a few houses. At a difficult time, in 1852, when settle-

ment Lithuanian villagers became even more repressed and taciturn, and the forests surrounding the fields were still pervaded by the pain and anxiety of the partisan resistance, chased off by the false enthusiasm of forcible collectivisation. Nekrolytis was born in Žemaitija, a geographical region of Lithuania famous for its stern and stubborn men who are said to have descended from even strange stock - they opposed Christianization for a long time and secretly worshipped their holy fires and sacred trees. The genes of parochial world perception are distinct in Nekrolytis' theatre - they are expressed in the director's aptitude for bringing out the theoretical character of pure natural elements. The water, earth, wood, lava, stone. The traditional building material of his theatrical matter.

Having started to study actor's training in Vilnius in 1971, Nekrolytis surprised his fellow students by his weird, in their words, "unstudied" manners and looked lost in an unknown city. They were utterly puzzled to see Nekrolytis' first independently created sketch - an impression from the theme of *Bioskino. My Love by Margarita* (Birutė) representing two people splitting up. To the sound of a poor-quality Pink Floyd recording coming from a worn-out Soviet reel-to-reel recorder, a man and a woman were cutting a wooden log with a hand saw. Actor Kestutis Smiergys, the future protagonist of Nekrolytis' performances

*The Square and Macbeth*, still cannot forget his impression from the demonstration theatre of the Lithuanian Conservatory: "Something unthinkable - a hand saw and Pink Floyd."

True, at the beginning of the eighties, in our lives these two realities did not connect - they and us, our hand saws and their Pink Floyd. Only a born anarchist-lover could put them together. Nekrolytis' first attempts at creating theatre naturally and freely, like air, rise from his nature. From the viewpoint of the purity of style or historical truth, the anarchistic juxtaposition of a wooden log, hand saw and Pink Floyd was used as a message about what would always be present in his theatre - the always-amazing link of archaic and modernity. Nekrolytis' art of creating a link developed further, and his last two productions, of Shakespeare's tragedies - *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, liberated (or drove to the extreme) the effect of civilian individuality characteristic of his theatre.

In this respect Nekrolytis is unique. His theatre combines what in the case of Lithuania can still be formally distinguished as two cultures - the agrarian (archaic) and the urban (modern). Certainly, the intersection of these two cultures in Nekrolytis' theatre is neither illustrative nor representative. In this respect Nekrolytis is also traditional, if we call tradition that which is untranslatable. The presence of these two cultures in Nekrolytis'



performances is so natural, as in the experience of the country and city life, on nature and civilisation in his own biography. Therefore, if we wish to describe Nekrasov's theatre, it is better to choose the words *artificial* and *simple* rather than *modern* and *traditional*. Nekrasov is one of those directors who are bound to discover. A discovery (unfinished), after it has been made, always turns out to be simple.

Yet, to Nekrasov, urban experience is secondary. He does not conceal his indifference to the rules of the intellectual elite. From his interview you can never say that he reads what is now considered fashionable, that he uses modern terminology and phrasing of wishes to answer the questions up to the mark. However, Nekrasov's public statements are always imbued with his personal experience, which is always amazing and sticks in memory. For example, on the eve of the premiere of *Hamlet*, the director somehow remembered one cold winter, when "there was so much snow everywhere, and no deer were starting to death. They tried to break the ice crust on the snow looking for food. Their legs got cut; their skin was rubbed soot and bleeding. Then they came upon a cemetery. In village cemeteries, far out in the fields and unscathed, they fed on flowers that grew there. All cemeteries were full of their footprints. No deer used to come to the dead as if to a

spring. To eat grass. To satisfy their hunger at least for an hour. So... Somebody died and thus saved a roe deer." Hamlet made it clear why talking about Shakespeare's tragedy he mentioned roe deer making their way to a village cemetery under icy snow, and why it is worth dying to save a roe deer. The ultimate meaning of the myth of father and son according to Nekrasov was revealed.

Though in a Lithuanian village we can still find distinct traces of theatricalised rites, the theatre as an initiation is part of urban culture. Therefore, Nekrasov regards it with suspicion. In his interview, Nekrasov insistently disparages the status of theatre people and their professional achievement. This idea can be explained by the basic imperative closely related to the director's rural descent: a villager's traditional view of a member of community who broke the natural bond with nature. Today Nekrasov is the only and probably the last of active and influential Lithuanian directors who had been raised on a farmstead and is obsessed by these surroundings forever. What is theatre in these surroundings? An unimportant person's unimportant occupation. It is worthwhile to quote some of the director's thoughts. In 1986, asked about his choice of profession, Nekrasov, as usual, refused to see any extraordinary features in director's work, saying that theatre is merely one among

many forms of human activity; and the famous phrase like "theatre is a way of life, a temple or a world view" were not acceptable to him. "I can't play music. I can't draw. Theatre is the art form most accessible both to the artist and the audience. It is an art form that doesn't require special training. Only those who work in the theatre find it difficult. Looking from aside, it is all lightness and fiction... Direction is more craft." Even without psychoanalytical insight one can notice a strange feeling of guilt or uneasiness about his work in the theatre. And next to the word *fiction*, as something intrinsically negative, the word *craft* appears to justify theatre people.

In 1996 the director was even more categorical: "Theatre is the lowest art form, consuming the least amount of intellect, talent and work. I can see a large disproportion between what theatre people give and what they receive in return - fame, recognition, success. It is a painful paradox. Sometimes I feel ashamed of it. I talk with serious musicians, doctors and physicists, and feel like an absolute zero." The director's decision to rehearse *Hamlet* with a non-professional can be regarded as a concrete expression of this mindset. His choice can be viewed as a symbolist demystification of the significance of the theatre and the director's conscious attempt to make the situation more complicated and take on more difficult

task, in this way overemphasizing the feeling of being "an absolute zero".

Nekrošius' nature shapes his conception of stage space. He is faithful to the sooty and crude stage matter and does not need modern stage design. Let's say, in Hamlet, all he needs is prop and air. Rain, drink and mist. In his own words, a change of physical status. Ice and fire. Sensity is replaced by props whose function becomes clear only when they are put to use. These are special props coming from concrete locations: a circular saw from the town of Tytuvėnai, old typesetting tables, a narsiauskis printing-press, an odd fragment of metal fence, two street lamp poles.... These objects are united not by their authenticity and not even by the fact that they are devoid of their former function, oxidated and fit only for throwing away. They are united by the danger inherent in them. The circular saw, the prop, a knife, splinters of a glass breaking in mid-air, and heavy metal chains. Props physically dangerous to those who come near. Because it is a *Theatrum Mundi*. Actors do not have to bow to the audience after the performance. The stage is not merely a place of illusions. It is lethal to stay there. Boundaries between theatre and life, the dead and the living have been obliterated. This is also distinct in his latest production, *Moskva*, literally vibrating with transcendental realism.

Nekrošius' theatre reveals the change in the essence of histrionics well. Hamlet addresses the action with a request to help him stop the theatre of life. It turns out that it is not the exalted creature of art seeking an epiphany or catharsis who are able to do it, but mortally dangerous actions posing a real threat to the human body. Claudio is trapped in the printing press that has acquired the form of a killing implement. A psychic shock is replaced by a physical impact. It is not Claudio's conscience that is aroused. His frightened body reacts: it stinks.

An insightful researcher of Shakespeare's work, Jānis Kort, once remarked that depending on the time and country where the performance is produced, every Hamlet reads a different book, and from his choice of book one can guess what kind of Hamlet he is. In Nekrošius' performance Hamlet does not have a book. He answers Polonius' question "What do you read, my lord?" with the words from the play "Words, words, words!" But this Hamlet smells words out. He sniffs out phrases floating in the air, commas and lines from his letters to Ophelia turned into ashes. This is non-professional's behavior. His language is the language of senses. He experiences the existential revelation in his body - during the monologue "To be or not to be", his drenched white shirt is torn into pieces and peels off his body like skin. This is how Hamlet loses virginity.

## Nekrošius' theatre is positioned at an intersection of archaism and modernity as well as of the East and the West. The spiritual geography of his theatre can be equated to Lithuania's geographical situation



Hamlet, photo G.Rutkauskas

Nekrošius reads Shakespeare's tragedies like his Hamlet reads words. This way of reading is a real challenge to the conventional staging of Shakespeare's plays.

2.

After two years of actor's training at the Lithuanian Conservatory, Nekrošius studied directing at the State Institute of Theatre Art in Moscow under Andrej Goncharov, constantly balancing on the verge of being expelled and followed by his teacher's thundering voice: "Not the right school, not the right line, you're taking the wrong way." Having returned home, Nekrošius can still hear the echo of his former teacher's reprimands from his countrymen time and again. "Not the right school" now means the excessively strong influence of the Slavic world perception on Nekrošius' theatre in view of its repertory and literary orientation. While he was rehearsing the famous *Square* crystallized from Soviet propaganda fiction, young Lithuanian directors produced *Maycock* by Etchekine or *Ubu Roi* by Jarry. This attitude of a rather immovable part of the intellectual society to Nekrošius' literary choices has become more expensive since his theatre started touring abroad. They feel sore that the director, who can worthily present Lithuania to the world, can do without Lithuanian plays (Nekrošius has produced only one Lithuanian play to date - *Draukinis Belladis* by Sudžin Šaltberis at the Kaunas Drama Theatre in 1978). These reprimands to the director derive from the feeling of being a forgotten nation in the history of world literature. It is difficult to overlook the fact that when in 1978 on the initiative of Mira Tulačiūtė, the Youth Theatre was invited to BETEF with the performance *Picromani*.

*Picromani*, it was the first time that a professional Lithuanian drama theatre participated in an international theatre festival. At the same time, with the increasing recognition of Nekrošius in the West, each strange and incomprehensible expression of his theatrical language was automatically attributed to his nationality - Lithuanian. One can imagine how strange Nekrošius must have felt when he read in the cultural weekly *Literature and Art* an interview with his teacher Andrej Goncharov who arrived in Vilnius on tour with the Mapakomiski Theatre in the spring of 1996. Thrown off balance by a young journalist's questions about his student's performance *The Three Sisters*, the open Soviet director forgot all diplomatic skills: "Nekrošius doesn't love Russians."

Nekrošius' theatre is positioned at an intersection of archaism and modernity as well as of the East and the West. The spiritual geography of his theatre can be equated to Lithuania's geographical situation. In the development of Nekrošius' mythology, his first performance is unforgettable. Or, to be more exact, its venue.

In 1977, Nekrotilas produced his graduation work, *A Taste of Honey* by Shlagh Delaney, on the chamber stage of the Youth Theatre department in the Old Town of Vilnius. It was a small-sized hall with an impressive historical tile stove, and minimal and most primitive stage equipment. The Youth Theatre department was located in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance-style house of a famous Lithuanian nobleman family. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century this house accommodated Vilnius' only theatre, and was later remodeled a number of times under different proprietors. It not only combines different architectural styles, but has also absorbed different national experiences of Lithuanians, Poles, Jews and Russians, all crucial to the culture of Vilnius. Like these 18<sup>th</sup>-century walls, the space of Nekrotilas' theatre absorbs everything that is around and becomes multi-layered. Perhaps that is why not only the director's fellow citizens are attracted to his work. In other words,

Nekrotilas' theatrical worldview transgresses the boundaries of any class-defined (and not only) theatrical worldview.

That is how Nekrotilas' paradox is formed - the presence of a non-idiomatic influence in his theatre is obvious. He can be called an artist of pure genre who reads Shakespeare or Chekhov as if he were their first reader. Nekrotilas' theatre seems to be a work of one person, and its author is eager to do (try) everything himself and therefore does not trust the widely advertised advanced technologies of the theatre. At the same time, his theatre is open to variety, inquisitive and responsive to new experience, always to be filtered out by Nekrotilas' nature. He is a perfect example of the no-longer-popular type of a literary hero who travels around the world leaving his home in some remote place, observes everything and integrates his new experience with what he has brought from the past. When Nekrotilas returned with the Youth Theatre from their first tour of the United States (1988) - the land carrying a mythical meaning for the Lithuanians due to their largest and most successful emigrant community - he met all attempts to measure the trip's huge significance with a curt statement - "Everybody's heart is on the left side."

It would be wrong to say that *A Taste of Honey* signaled the coming of a Lithuanian theatre celebrity. Nekrotilas was received with a traditional dose of hope measured out to every new name in the small community of Lithuanian theatre people. It did not take him long to win more attention with his next two performances produced at Kuras Drama Theatre, and the premiere of *The Square* at the Youth Theatre in 1988 helped him establish himself as one of the leading Lithuanian directors.

Those who did not see the opening night or did not live in Lithuania in the nineties, have-



ing taken a look at the undistinguished text of the performance, will hardly believe that its stage version might have had any artistic value. However, this obvious discrepancy between the literary and stage variants of this work was the decisive and even historical victory of *The Square*. The first night legitimized Nekrotilas' theatre and the doctrine of performance as an autonomous work in the Lithuanian theatre. Nekrotilas has often had to explain and motivate the theatre's right to be more than a mere reproduction of literature: "Facts are similar. Love and hate, life and death are eternal issues. Therefore it is important to understand what lies in between words, what kind of space opens behind them." In between words lies the theatre, the

space of its creative power and freedom. Behind words opens the space of the director's imagination.

When Nekrotilas suggested a metaphor "a space in between words" (1984), it had a political undertone as well. In the reality of censored culture, words were not trusted because of their devaluation. Nekrotilas argued: "In the theatre a word serves an action", and only in this way "a play becomes a performance". It seems that the declamation of the elementary process of theatrical work turning one art form into another, at the beginning of the nineties sounded as a challenge. At that time Lithuanian theatre was dominated by the Anatolian tradition: compared with the value of the play, the

**He is a perfect example of the no-longer-popular type of a literary hero who travels around the world having left his home in some remote place, observes everything and integrates his new experience with what he has brought from the past**



performance was considered limited. The Square established a direction style based on stage images and the visual language of the performance. After the political changes, with the accelerating dynamics of international contacts and cultural parallelism, a student of the Juilliard School in New York described the Lithuanian theatre in a way that sounded symptomatic: in his words, in America "a table is always a table on stage, and here a table may become anything."

Nekrasius was convinced: "Nobody among the audience recalls what our Poissontai said before death, but everybody remembers how they took him to die." How can we not remember the question raised by Peter Brook in his *Empty Space*: "When a performance ends, what remains?" and the answer: "Two vagrants under the tree, an old woman, pulling a cart, a dancing sergeant, three people on a sofa in hell". If we draw an analogy (through Nekrasius himself has never bothered about that) with what was taking place in the theory of theatre outside Lithuania at that time and was irascible due to ideological factors, we could recall the famous book by Ann Übersfeld *To Read the Theatre, and A Dictionary of the Theatre* by Patrice Pavis that appeared in the same year as *The Square* by Nekrasius and asserted, like *The Square*, that a performance itself can explain its constituent ele-

ments and the rules of their functioning. In his first performances, Nekrasius taught and trained the audience to read the theatre, to go into the system of code signs, to feel and see the space in between words. Consciously or not, Nekrasius approached the theatre of director's dramaturgy step by step, having honestly judged himself, his actors and the audience. He started from adaptations of little known literature (*The Square*, *Frogs*,

*Praxasti...*), a dramatization of a classical play (*Love and Death in Vienna*), later put on a dramatization of a prose text (*A Day Long as a Thousand Years*), and only then did he produce a classical play (*Užcis Norys*) and stayed faithful to it for a long time (*Three Sisters*, *Marija and Marietta*). That is, Nekrasius was checking himself, as it were, until he made sure that he can work without literary assistants preparing a special edition of the rehashed text. Then he found himself alone, face to face with the canons of drama and the belief that a performance represents not the dramaturg's text but the result of that text in the imagination, psyche and the up-to-date ethical and aesthetic values of the person who creates it.

The classical scene of *The Square* is the one with sugar lumps. She (actress Dalia Gerasaitė) would come to the prison to visit him (actor Eustas Smoriginas). Having communicated by

letters, they meet for the first time. Both would feel shy and awkward. Not knowing what to say, he would produce a lump of sugar from his pocket and place it carefully on the metal frame of his plastic bed, saying, "It's for you." With a humble and polite thank you, she would pick up this single token of hospitality. Seeing that his gift was accepted, Smoriginas would immediately produce another lump and then rush to a mailbox, a special symbol of *The Square*. This blue mailbox,

apparently taken off the wall of some old Vilnius house, was a mythologized agent of freedom: their letters used to travel through it. (It is interesting that signs of the free world - a mailbox, a radio set - used in *The Square* came from the strictly controlled sphere of communication). Smoriginas would take a grey hand-made bag from the mailbox and hide it under his bosom. Having returned to the middle of the stage, he would sit on a wooden stool and begin his strange declamation of love. He would untie the bag, take one lump of sugar, seal it with his fingers like a blind man wishing to recognize what it is, throw it up and say: "Do you know what it is?" "Sugar." The actress and everybody in the audience could answer in the same way. "No," he would shake his head in disagreement and say after a pause: "It's Monday." "It's for you!" and throw the first lump to her. Then he

would take another, lick it, ponder for a second and announce: "It's Sunday!" In this manner, smearing, licking and touching lumps of sugar with his fingers, Smiriginas would increase the rhythm of the episode until all these lumps of sugar symbolizing the days of loneliness and longing would pour down on her shoulders as a proof of his long-harboured feeling.

In Macbeth produced in 1999, it is the stones that fall on Smiriginas' shoulders. Now the director shows us the weight of guilt, *Misina culpa*. The most ominous and horrible scene, as if taken down from the Old Testament, takes place when Macbeth demands that the Witches call their master. A ball of stone pours down from the sky as a watershed metaphor of sin or damnation that cannot be lifted. As a final verdict, the heasens' answer to Macbeth. But this is not all. The Witches fit, the pockets of Macbeth's coat with stones, and he sets off to kill the child with stony legs, bent down with this terrible heaviness, stumbling over and swinging.

These scenes, both connected and divided by a twenty-year period, aware us with the originality of the director's imagination and their dramatic form. A metaphor actively used in Nekrolias' theatre has always been noted for its dynamics and emerged from very simple objects of daily use or from natural elements. In his theatre familiar things turn into fresh images. Besides, Nekrolias' metaphor always derives from the actors' physical actions and is an expression of their spiritual status, an emotional and meaning-cloaked culminations of these actions. In his production of *The Square*, Nekrolias already knew that a theatrical sign encodes something that causes immediate amazement and shock. He knew what he could not have known and never sought to know. I refer to the ideology of the Prague linguistic school and its statement that an object that plays the role of a theatrical sign on stage in the course of performance acquires features and qualities that it has never had in real life. Like a white lump of sugar from *The Square*.

#### 4.

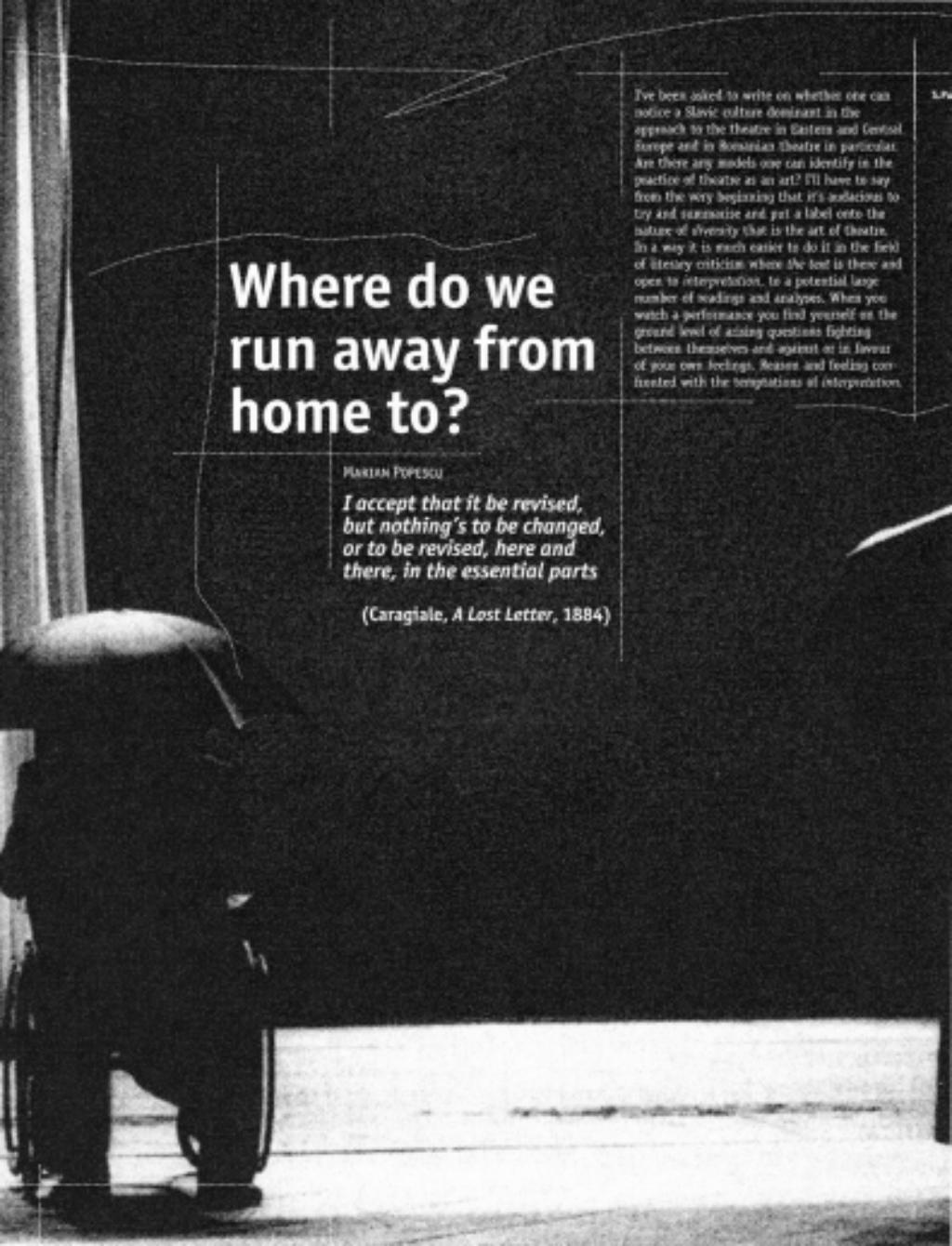
Nekrolias' first performance started with silence and darkness. For several minutes strange dots of light were moving on a pitch-black stage. The audience could hardly identify the source of this light, obviously not produced by stage equipment. Only when the stage was lit, was its secret revealed - these dots of light came from cigarettes smoked by two women, mother and daughter. Nekrolias' every performance starts with a prologue - actors playing in silence, taming both the stage and the audience and introducing them to the atmosphere of action. At first this effect was shocking. The audience was accustomed to see the action start as soon as the lights went down. Nekrolias brought back a



Macbeth, photo: D.Ratnevičov

performance with an obligatory prologue, developed in the last centuries and later forgotten. With the growth of Nekrolias' influence, performances starting "not at once" sprung up in all former Soviet Union. This became a mark of good style, characteristic even of the contemporary Lithuanian theatre. We know from the history of art that, according to Eugène Barba, to create a tradition means to allow yourself to be "robbed." Moscow theatre people have spread a joke that as soon as Nekrolias shows a new performance in Moscow, Russian directors know what to do. The point is that in addition to everything else, his performances have applied value and present a possibility to continue his theatrical language elsewhere and in a different measure. This and Moscow-style humor seems to reflect serious issues: one can borrow and copy from Nekrolias; his work can inspire to passionately agree or oppose. Like the work of any true artist. However, as he continues to work for twenty years in a fixed geographical space, his epigones corrupt the original, and the young generation of Lithuanian theatre people is already talking that Nekrolias moves in the direction of self-reproduction. Nekrolias approaches the maturity crisis, precipitated by those around him who know his theatre better than the audience of prestigious international festivals discovering him anew. Today it is easier for Nekrolias in the world at large than at home on the edge of that world.

Romanas Macinevičius is a Lithuania-Moscow 1975.



# Where do we run away from home to?

MARIAM POPESCU

*I accept that it be revised,  
but nothing's to be changed,  
or to be revised, here and  
there, in the essential parts*

(Caragiale, *A Lost Letter*, 1884)

I've been asked to write on whether one can notice a Slavic culture dominant in the approach to the theatre in Eastern and Central Europe and in Romanian theatre in particular. Are there any models one can identify in the practice of theatre as an art? I'll have to say from the very beginning that it's ridiculous to try and summarise and put a label onto the nature of slowness that is the art of theatre. In a way it is much easier to do it in the field of literary criticism where the text is there and open to interpretation, to a potential large number of readings and analyses. When you watch a performance you find yourself on the ground level of asking questions fighting between themselves and against or in favour of your own feelings. Reason and feeling confronted with the temptations of interpretation.

Romanian theatre has been developed in the Eastern area which has been heavily marked by the Slavic culture since the XVI up to the XVIII century. Having its major and essential root in the Latinity of the Roman Empire, Romanian is the only civilization in the South-East of Europe to preserve in its language (based mainly on Latin with Slavic addition) the heritage of this beginning at the same time offering to European culture a fascinating mixture of the Occident and the Orient. But this is History! In the theatre you won't find an easily a clear statement of the Models: Romanian theatre, for instance, owes its beginnings to both the influence of French theatre tours (German and Italian to a lesser extent) in the XIX century but also to great efforts to assert national identity through

Romanian language. And this has started with the preparation of the 1848 Revolution, one of the chain-like reactions that happened in Europe. Many of the tentatives structuring the theatre were shaped according to Occidental models in terms of education, official decisions, institutions, actor's training, set design etc. along with defending the Romanian neo-Latin language. Another fact is that Romania is over 90% an orthodox country and this meant a lot and still does for the way theatre has been conceived as a means of educating people but also in terms of elements of creating the theatre. This doesn't necessarily or explicitly mean signs of religious cult on stage but mainly a kind of a laicist attitude towards the very facts of life and death. And you could see these in some of the works of the theatre directors Silvia Pascaete (Phaedra or Drăguț with Sonner from *Murder*) or Mihai Manuțiu.

Over forty years of alienation in national history, civilization and culture that followed after 1947, when the sovietization of Romania began as a consequence of the end of World War II, make it difficult to understand the relationship between national identity and the theatre. Since the mid XIX century, when the dominance of Slavic culture began to be less perceptible and the French took the lead, it was very clear that one of the most important things was to educate people in their own language. And one of the means has ever since been the historical plays in which the great figures of national history were shown as indicators of patriotism. But it was different from





the Western canon which Harold Bloom identifies in Shakespeare in the sense that in modern times propaganda and ideology as constructs of pragmatic thinking have many times determined an unstable course from "national" to "nationalism".

When Gheorghiu came back from his visit to China in 1971, nationalism was reinforced in Romania as well as censorship. Theatre could, but had to react in order to sustain its artistic profile. And that was done not through plays but through rhetorical language which was soon to be recognized as a "national" mark. Allusions, neoclassical language, metaphors, all mannered the creativity in our best theatre in order to face the impossibility to speak freely by means of art. It also created a sort of complicity with the audience - a common denominator of the theatre from the East - which might still be incomprehensible for a foreigner in the West when lacking the background but which undeniably has its honour and power to create sense on stage. And the classic works are at

the core of it. You can find here, on another level, a remnant of that XIX century rush for solid values of the European culture in the arts: literature, painting and music. And this is one of the paradoxes of what it means to be Romanian and a "desperate" mixture of traditional mentality and openmindedness which you can notice in everyday life in Romania. After 1989, arts have been subject to a considerable pressure for many years and theatre, for instance had and still has to react through different ways to an unprecedented spectrum of diversity that affected the individual on the whole. Theatre directors who are regarded as leaders of the artistic process, would still go on making classic repertory choices as if censorship was there. They would appeal more and more to the classic works looking for a **cultural safety-belt** and it is very rare for their work to concentrate on the intimacy of the creative process. Of course subjects, themes, experiments that would indicate a new trend in the work. I have been amazed all these

years by the large amount of residual ideology and mental patterns from before 1989 that is still present in the theatre productions. It was reflected in the plays, the conventional way to work with the actors. I analysed all these components of the theatrical process in Romanian theatre after 1989 in my book *The Broken Mirror*<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, you can't expect a major change all of a sudden. Bogdan Eliac<sup>2</sup> thinks that "the collapse of political and economic systems in several European countries prompted conclusions that the socialism they represented was just an utopia". Even if there now is a tendency to reconsider the basics of Marxism and see whether the distortion it suffered through social and political pragmatism of the former communist countries did not eclipse the very essence of a utopian project<sup>3</sup>, it became obvious that many speak of a **negative utopia**: in a way it recalls a classic work, very dear to Marxism, Tomás Campion's *The hundred years old The City of the Sun*, where soul and mind, life and death, good on

<sup>1</sup> Marian Purcăreanu, *Sigilante Sparte. Teatru românește după 1989 ("The Broken Mirror. Romanian Theatre after 1989")*, Urzicet, București, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Bogdan Eliac, *The Plot of the Future. Utopia and Dystopia in Modern Drama*, The University of Michigan Press, 1994, p.65

<sup>3</sup> Maria Popescu, *Marxism Today*, ed. by Rykard Parandov and Lazarus Novak, Rodopi, Amsterdam-Amstelveen, 1995 (Human Studies in the philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities, vol.1), Adam Mickiewicz University, see the Introduction

<sup>4</sup> Marian Purcăreanu, "Purcăreanu's theory of Fear and Joy", In *Theatre Research*, no. 13 (summer-fall 1998), University of California, San Diego



## Allusions, aesopian language, metaphors, all marked the creativity in our best theatre, in order to face the impossibility to speak freely by means of art

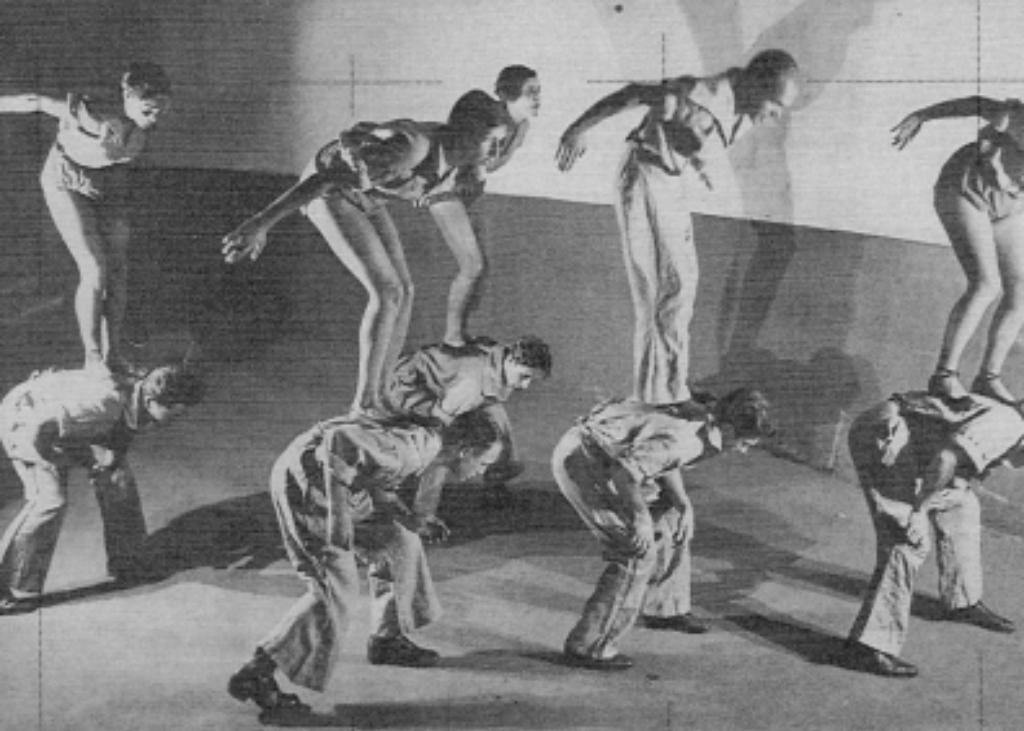
evil are represented in a geometric design so as to meet the perfection of life on Earth. Yet, nobody could propose - not the European bodies today - what this means in terms of reality. Some of the theatre made by Silvia Puscaște, for instance, is based on a vision of things both dividably simple and violently complicated. "I think" - he said when I interviewed him two years ago - "we're looking for the divine nature of human being all the time. I have tried to show it in a concentrated manner and very openly, how much splendour and abjection lie in every human gesture. I even see splendour in horror. *Ubu Roi*, for instance, (*Ubu Rex with Smeagol from *Moby-Dick**), has a divine aspect as well as a glorifying side. To me, the final cannibalistic scene in *Titus Andronicus* seems an apotheosis and I staged it that way. I felt the need to use Mozart there because the moment had to have splendour and horror". Puscaște's theatre in the early '90's is not labyrinthine at all. It originates from a philosophy where Good and Evil are as distinct as a child might imagine or perceive them. Children are taught what can't or shouldn't be done because "that's bad" even if the explanations are not always clear. Wonder, joy, sorrow and violence are all present, to different degrees, in the child's mind. Notions of Good and Evil play a great part in his philosophy as a director. The special mixture of them makes one feel what is entitly Romanian in his work. Ubu and Titus Andronicus are figures of humanity under assault. In these two productions from 1991/92 Puscaște emphasized not just the imperfection of our world, but the atrocious social, political and historical economy by which ideological and political patterns have been imposed on the lives of ordinary people. This is why Puscaște believes that "art, artistic activity in general, does not aim to make man perfect, but to preserve him in his miserable conditions, his imperfect state. It's about glorifying the imperfection of man. This is, to some extent, how man gets closer to God".

One of the things that are certain of the Romanian contemporary theatre is that since the '90's one can detect the start of an institutionalized system of theatre of Soviet origin imposed by the artificial division of Europe in West and East, between capitalism and communism. The effects of the Cold War are still present, on a lesser scale, yet, in the tentatives that are being made by European bodies to make a united Europe. Democratic values, open scepticism and the praised values of market economy are, among others, the key-concepts to define a new Europe. Despite many efforts to do these - and they go on - when you consider art, creativity and the artist it is very easy to see that cultural differences and national identities are always at stake. For a

this point of view, usually, the Romanian theatre process bears the mark of an organic vision of the whole where signs, expressivity of the body, a way of speaking, the choice of colours for the set and music composed, in what's best of it, a theatrical language that could be identified as coming from an Eastern country. Besides, Stanislavski's actors' training system has been imposed in the theatre education in Romania since the '50's. It was much closer to Romanian way of creativity than Grotowski's, for instance, which was very little known in practice. But Peter Brook's theatre, to give another example, is another major theatrical practice of this century known here. This organic vision is best detected in many theatre performances coming from Central and Eastern theatres when they present Shakespeare or Chekhov's major plays. Their works form a cultur of its own in Romanian theatre where the number of new productions is still huge. Andrei Serban, who left Romania in 1989 and then lead the avant-garde of the American theatre in the '70's, came back after 1989 and revived the following years *The Greek Trilogy*, *The Twelfth Night* and *The Cherry Orchard* at the National Theatre in Bucharest. These three performances could give an insight into the culture of modernism when working on classic texts. What really made a great impact on the audience, apart from the fact that the production of *The Trilogy* used ancient Greek and Latin mixed with Romanian, was a certain language of suffering. The voices of actors composed a special sound, so as to reveal what Eugeniu Barbu called "that part in ourselves that lives in exile". In Chekhov's play and in Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night*, a sense of deep irony and dramatic, unusual for our audiences, has been immediately felt by audiences coming from a society where suffering and irony, or a good sense of humor are a way of living which is traceable also in literatures and theatres of Central and Eastern Europe. But these production also offered a reason to think of the fundamentals of our culture and civilization.

West and East, Occident and Orient, the Catholic and the Orthodox faith form the nucleus of European culture. When Pope John Paul II was secretly in Bucharest on what is considered a historical visit, the first ever to an orthodox country, what one could have often heard was his message in favour of unity of faith. The culture of diversity which is Europe can't be preserved and developed as such if the inner belief in creating art as a way to stress, explore and offer the dramatic and, why not, wonderful fundamentals of human existence is not always there, in mind and soul.

Marius Popescu is a theatre critic, author and translator, lecturer at the University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest.



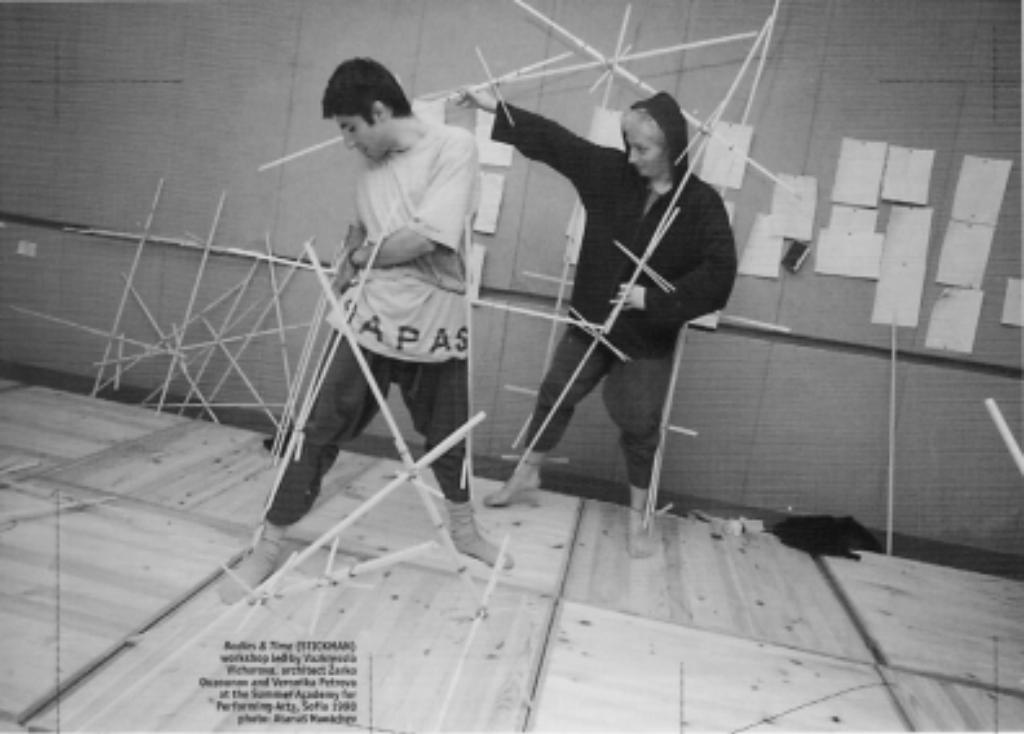
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# Training and the “Change of Air” in the Theatre

DESSY GAVRILOVA

New training opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe and the emergence of a new theatrical language

In the spring of 1997, the Bulgarian theatre director and founder of the New Bulgarian University Theatre Department Vassilena Vachanova was giving a workshop for the students of acting in Chisinau, Moldova. The workshop, entitled *Stick Men*, focused its interest on the actor's body and energy. It was about researching the way the performer-energy interact. What happens when you shout a word in the face of your performing partner; how does your energy, which is let out in this way, affect the expansion of and transform the energy of "the other"? How does the presence, movements, or the energy of another actor influence your presence on stage? What is the source of the performer's energy? These were all basic actor's training questions, which are at the core of Vassilena Vachanova's performer's training system, mastered by the workshop leader over her six years' daily work with her students at the New Bulgarian University. The Moldavians would be actors were, however, facing these questions in their practical work for the first time, it was the first training they were experiencing, in which their bodies, and not the character they were supposed to represent, was put into the



Berlin, 8. Time (TETRAHEDRON) workshop led by Valentina Petkova. Workshop participants: Valentina Petkova and Veronika Petkova at the Summer Academy for Performing Arts, Sofia 1998. photo: Blagovesh Kosachev

centre of interest. The students were letting themselves be curious, they were working hard to make their bodies follow the interest of the exercise, but at the same time they were puzzled, and bothered by a question they couldn't find an easy answer to: "Can one make theatre out of all this?"

Moldova is one of the many countries in the diverse region of Central and Eastern Europe, where over the last decades whenever theatre training and education was in question, there was only one obvious name that was being discussed; that of the great theatre reformer at the end of nineteenth and the beginning of this century - Stanislavski. Methods of education in theatre academies throughout the region were explicitly based on his system, which taught the actor to look for those bits of their own inner experience which were related to the character they were representing on stage in order to create a psychologically and socially convincing personage. In a way he would hardly have appreciated, Stanislavski was turned into the single god in the theatre, his approach to the art of acting was made the ruling actor's training method, and his works were studied and

taught throughout the theatre academies in the wide region of Central and Eastern Europe. One could not help but make parallels with the way that in political life at that time there was one official party only - the ruling one, and in literature, one method - the social realism.

Without any doubt, in the last decades, great works of art were produced by the artists educated in the theatre academies in this wide region, and, naturally, trained in Stanislavski's method. To name but a few, the Russians Anatoly Efros, Lev Dodin, the Georgian Shalva Asatiani Efros, Lev Dodin, the Georgian Shalva Asatiani, the Lithuanian Nekrolytis - all came out of Stanislavski's oversight. Their theatre was epic or intimate, but always able to tell human stories in a moving and enlightening way - the heights of a theatre tradition, centred around understanding the character, understanding what is making it move.

It might seem peculiar and unfair to speak about Stanislavski's acting training method being the dominant, or even the only official one in Central and Eastern Europe in the last decades, when in the same period we have great reformers of theatre language like Grotowski, Staniewski, or Kaczon, working in

**Stanislavski was turned into the single god in the theatre, his approach to the art of acting was made the ruling actor's training method, and his works were studied and taught throughout the theatre academies in the wide region of Central and Eastern Europe**



the region in question. These are all theatre authors which have inspired professionals throughout the world, whose methods are still being researched and followed by those seeing theatre as stemming from the ritual, or as posing the question of the performer's inner life, the performer's stand in the world, and not as a re-representation of human characters and stories.

Still, we can claim that up till the end of the eighties there was hardly an alternative approach to the theatre, and more importantly, there were no schools which would research and teach theatre from different perspectives. Those who - like Grotowski or Stanislawski - did question the nature of theatricality, were mostly turned into myths, and isolated. Is it not characteristic, for example, that the participants at the international symposia organised by Grotowski during the eighties were coming largely from Western Europe and the US? This apparent openness meant that the research and practice of groups like Grotowski stayed an un-sealed secret for the performing arts workers in countries neighbouring Poland on the East, and beyond them. Attempts to introduce an alternative approach to the actor's body and to pose questions of the essence of theatre, of where theatricality stems from, were at a rate excluded from the official theatrical world across

most countries of the region. Those trying to introduce alternative approaches or methods, were marginalised, or put in impossible working conditions. However, they often had the charisma of the alternative, and were able to attract followers, thus often gathering around themselves - not unlike guru - subversive schools of converted followers. These were however kept on the verge of non-existence, with dooms to recognition set by the official culture. Neither were they granted financial means to allow them to work.

The Russians have been neglected and forgotten (at least in the living theatre practice, and far rare in the actors' education) Meierhold, Vachtanov, or Michail Chekhov's work - their own theatre reforms of the beginning of the century. Very little was known at that time about the working method, and the philosophy behind the practice of such groundbreaking twentieth century authors like Eugenio Barba, Jaques Lecoq, Pina Bausch, Augusto Boal, to name just a few. Even long standing 'classics' of theatre thought like Antoni Artaud, Gordon Craig, and even Bertolt Brecht were hardly known; their written work was difficult to find in the local languages, and contemporary research on their visions for theatre was simply not accessible.

What was taught in art academies and schools was a theatre language that was about

the study and representation of a character in its social environment; the actor was supposed to become a machine for representation of the internal motives and the life actions of "an other". This served rather well the main cause of theatre in the then communist countries, where the stage adopted a twofold function - an intimate place for compassionate research into human nature, and a platform for voicing basic truths of contemporary social life (when other channels for doing that were closed).

As nearly all other spheres of life, a lot started to change in the theatre in Central and Eastern Europe in the nineties. The first 'agent of change' which emerged was information. If anything, the fall of the Berlin Wall brought to the theatre professionals from the East of Europe a rich and diverse information flow. As a first reaction to this flood of information the works of the key twentieth century performing arts thinkers began to be translated. This went hand in hand with the mass of translations and first stagings of a number of twentieth century plays, which were up till that time tacitly banned. The whole dramaturgy of the absurd, the dada team, and many contemporary texts reached the stages and the professional public in the region, largely only after the changes.

In the same time, the subversive alternative theatre schools, which were starting to take

shape in the previous period, were in many cases gaining an official status. Anatolij Vassilev, for example, founded his theatre laboratory, which nurtured some of the most interesting theatre authors of contemporary Russia. Valentina Vichanova founded the New Bulgarian University Theatre department, which has already produced a generation of actors in Bulgaria which think theatre differently, and speak a new theatrical language. Contemporary dance schools emerged here and there across the region (in Hungary as a high school, elsewhere in the format of a number of occasional training courses arranged by programmes of contemporary dance). Dance was for the first time introduced as an art form which uses the body in order to analyse and express human nature, as opposed to ballet, where the accent is on the perfection of a set of rather rigid movements of the dancer's body. Occasional training courses in different disciplines (movement, voice training, acting techniques) have served as a first hand introduction to a variety of acting techniques, having raised the awareness about the fact that theatre is a complex form of art, requiring a perfection of control over each aspect of the performer's body. They also came to explode the previously widely accepted understanding that once you graduate as an actor, and obtain a diploma, you actually become an artist. More and more performing artists started to accept that their profession requires continuous training throughout their careers.

In the last decade we were witnessing a greater mobility of artists, including theatre makers within Europe and abroad. And whereas employment regulations and language barriers limit the chances of performing artists to chose in which part of Europe, and with actors of what nationality, to work, international training possibilities have provided a basis for an intensive exchange of information and given way to curiosity about other cultures, and different ways of thinking theatre. Those trained in the West often came back home to share what they have learned, and make it accessible for their local peers thus providing for an easy cultural exchange. Is it not ironic (or is it simply natural) that they were separating, only in the opposite direction - the exploratory trip that the Western theatre professionals were taking in the seventies and eighties, going to the East of Europe, most significantly to Poland, to learn from Grotowski, or Stanislawski? Now these Eastern Europeans are eager to learn what their teachers are more than likely to have themselves learned somewhere close to their homelands.

What mobility and increase in training opportunities brought to the Eastern part of Europe was a variety of artistic forms, which also brought a variety of forms of theatre companies' organisation. The companies which

## The actor was supposed to become a machine for representation of the internal motives and the life actions of "an other." This served rather well the main cause of theatre in the then Communist countries, where the stage adopted a twofold function - an intimate place for compassionate research into "human nature", and a platform for voicing basic truths of contemporary social life

were taking the uneasy road of experiment and who were challenging the then prevailing artistic forms, were looking for more flexible and mobile forms of existence, and did not follow the rules of the - then unquestioned and unquestionable - repertory theatre system. New independent groups have emerged, which also needed to learn how to manage themselves. A large number of young and motivated arts administrators went to be trained in courses of different size and duration on arts management; schools and programs in that field were created across the region.

What did all this splash of training opportunities bring to the theatre in the region of Central and Eastern Europe? There can naturally not be one answer valid for the whole wide region. And still, there is much in common, in terms of the processes which training has initiated in the theatrical life of the region - to different extent in each of the theatrical cultures concerned.

Maybe the most important consequence is that a certain openness to diverse artistic ideas was inspired - first among artists, and then the audience was also ready to appreciate the artistic results. Diversifying artistic

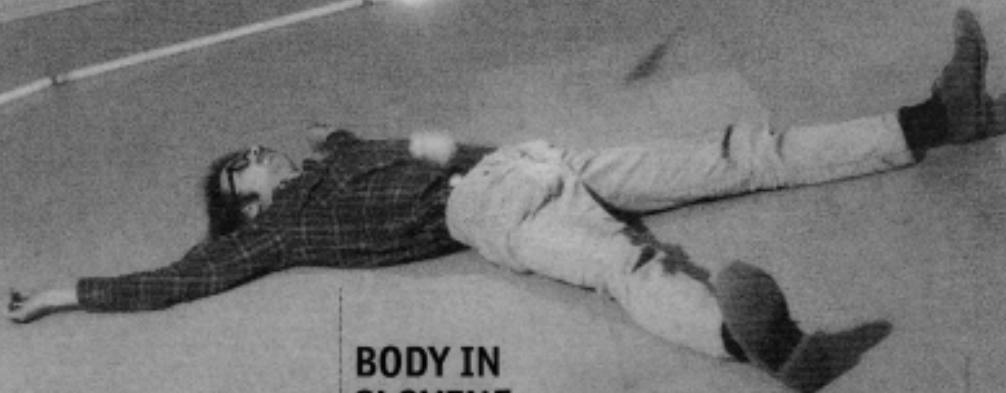
training brought a greater freedom of artistic expression, put an end to the uniform notion of what theatre is and can be, in other words, translated pluralism into theatrical language. In fact, the result being a change of attitudes of a wider circle of theatre goers as to what are the performing arts.

Nowadays one can go to Estonia and see contemporary dance on a roof of an office building, or in an empty swimming pool; enjoy a theatre performance in a Sztuka gallery space; or be bewildered in Hungary by a show which one is hard put to qualify as either dance or drama. It became easier for the audience to accept, and actually appreciate such merging of different art forms, while the freedom in choosing the tools of artistic expression made the arts more accessible.

The change of aesthetics brought with itself a change of organizational forms of performing arts production and presentation. Those who took the trip of exploring the performing arts with no pre-set limitations (who rejected the notion that theatre happens necessarily on a stage, and who didn't want to compromise artistic vision for the sake of accommodating to structures, simply because they existed) were not always finding it necessary to seek accommodation into the inherited structures of the repertory theatres across the region. They wanted to work with those who perceived the act of making theatre in a way similar to them, and they needed to form their own groups. A large number of independent groups did thus emerge across the region. Although initially they found it almost impossible to survive (the system did not envisage their funding), they slowly started to change the rules of the game. Their persisting efforts to open a space for making theatre the way they believed it should be made (including produced and presented) eventually brought an openness to the way arts funding was thought about, and in a few lucky countries, it also brought a change of the arts funding system. As a result, more space for diverse artistic creativity has opened, the production and presentation system became less rigid, marginalised groups got the chance to be included into the mainstream culture, thus providing for a constant artistic innovation, and in fact art did become more accessible.

To end on a playful note: let us close our eyes for a moment and name for ourselves the most interesting names of contemporary performing artists and groups in the region... You see it when you try to remember the type of art each of them is making - the theatre scene in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe became much more lively and interesting in the last decade, and diversified artistic touring has its share in the process.

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## BODY IN SLOVENE NEO AVANT-GARDE THEATRE

ALDO MILANOVIĆ

"Physical theatre"<sup>1</sup> first appeared in Slovenia as a concept and distinct artistic practice in the late sixties and early seventies, i.e. in the period usually referred to as the neo avantgarde. Until the late sixties, "body" or "physical" was perceived in Slovene theatre as something "carnal," in the meaning given to this unusual word in eroticism. The body is thus blasphemous, irrational, devious and vulgar; an insult to noble poetical emotions that disfigures public morality, which theatre itself is traditionally expected to not only protect, but to co-create as well. Theatre is a place where the body

appears in its living presence, where the public's contact with corporeality is not only metaphoric or metaphysical, but directly "physical." In theatre, the body is not an object which the consumer of an artistic creation has yet to imagine, create in his/her imagination; the body on stage is re-presented, materialized, offered for viewing and, in extreme cases, even for touching, i.e. direct physical contact. That is why theatre was found to be increasingly more "dangerous" by the guardians of public morality.

It appears, at first glance, as if we are dealing with an unusual duality, a

<sup>1</sup> The term "physical theatre" is used to designate the existence of a significant, marked "presence" of the body on stage and within the context of a broader, theoretically more developed concept of so-called body techniques, which was discussed in more detail in our text "Body Techniques: Claude Lévi-Strauss, Marcel Mauss, Eugène Bataille," *Motus*, Ljubljana 1998, VI, no. 3-4, pp. 70-75. The concept of body techniques was introduced in theoretical writings by G. Feuerstein (1970-1992) in a lecture given in 1981. His text "Body Techniques" was first published in *Journal de Psychologie*, XXIII, no. 3-4, March-April 1986 and later included in his posthumous book, *Sociologie et anthropologie* (1997).

"parallel morality" which allows certain other media of artistic production to represent a naked human body, although not so long ago, i.e. in the first half of the twentieth century, state censors in Slovenia warned the theatre administration that the "female cook being brought directly from the bedchamber to the hearing should be decently dressed"<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, one can find, e.g. in painting or sculpting, a countless number of nudes, yet the representation of a naked human body in painting and sculpting had long been codified in the past. It is most interesting to note that some theatre traditions allowed naked bodies to appear on stage, but only under the condition that they remained motionless, and thus part of a tableau vivant on stage, a living picture, which is only an extension of the traditional "non-living" picture. Even today, a naked body on stage seems somewhat shocking and immoral, particularly on the stages of more conventional, traditional theatres. Nevertheless, the drawing to a close from the classical theatre, where the naked bodies of actors was a most natural scene, through a long period when the naked body was driven off the theatre stages, to the modern theatre, which has considerably shaken moral rules governing "decent behaviour" in theatre. If there is any truth in the statement that theatre is the "house of culture", then this designation certainly applies for the culturally created barriers restraining the appearance of a naked body on the stage.

In the previous paragraph, we already touched upon the key issues concerning the body in theatre: social construction of the body, cultural codification of the body on the stage, and the so-called "body techniques". Similar to other theatre traditions, culturally codified corporeality on Slovene stages underwent several changes in the 20th century. As already mentioned, it moved towards an ideal (which, as is the case with every "ideal", is unattainable by definition) of the "liberated" body, i.e. a body that is to the smallest possible degree caught within the limits of "body tech-

niques" dictated by society (as a general frame) on the one side, and of body codes dictated by theatre tradition (in the sense of socially recognized aesthetics) on the other side. Searching for the "liberated body" in theatre was a characteristic aesthetic-political programme of students and the neo avant-garde theatre groups in the late sixties and early seventies. This approach can also be traced in the theatre practices of the Slovene neo avant-garde, particularly in the work of the art groups OHO and the Pupillijs Ferkwerk Theatre.

#### OHO: I AM EXHIBITING MY BODY

Maks Pogačnik, later one of the founders of the OHO art group, was invited to participate in a group exhibition in Kranj in 1966. Yet the very next day after the opening, his exhibits were removed from the gallery. Pogačnik then sent the following message to the director of the exhibition:

As of today, the 27th day of this month, from 4 p.m. onwards, I am exhibiting myself (my body) from 10 to 12 a.m. and from 4 to 7 p.m. in the basement (where I am not allowed to exhibit my works) with the following message:  
**MASKO POGAČNIK (BECAUSE I AM NOT ALLOWED TO EXHIBIT MY WORKS OF ART, I AM EXHIBITING MY BODY).**

First of all, I believe that, as a citizen, I have a right to be in the gallery when it is open. If I brought any other thing or work into the gallery, your workers could demand that I remove them.

Second, I see my body as a visual means of expression. That is also how I understood classical and Renaissance representation of the body, the only difference being that I am using (presenting) it for expression, while they represented it to express themselves.<sup>3</sup>

This was one of the first public performances of the OHO multimedia group, which, like Papillijs Ferkwerk, was born in the sphere of literature and gradu-

ally expanded into a blend of various other visual and body arts. Its name was taken from Pogačnik's book entitled OHO, which, in the author's words, is a neologism of the words *OK* (eye) and *HO* (ear). This acronym literally contained the entire manifesto of the OHO group: a widespread relativistic practice in the sixties. Although, in the opinion of critics of that time and present-day critics, some later happenings of the OHO group reached beyond Pogačnik's unusual walk through a Carniolan gallery in an old, borrowed resistance movement uniform with the sign ... I am exhibiting my body hanging around his neck (like hostages in World War II), precisely this happening from the early OHO phase marked the beginning of the awakening of corporeality and introduced a different attitude toward one's own body in the sixties.

The action projects of the OHO group were *post-festum* classified by critics into various types of artistic creativity (happening, fluxus, body art...). For Tomaž Brejc, author of the first retrospective exhibition of OHO in Ljubljana's ŠKUC Gallery in 1978, the first body art happening in the former Yugoslavia was *Carnival* by David Nez (April 1969, Modern Gallery in Ljubljana). Besides neon lamps, a stone and a hanging lightbulb, Nez's installation included the artist's body, which in this way became a structural element of the artistic product. "Although he is the central and joining element of the installation," remarks Lilijana Stepančič in her contribution on the OHO group and body art. "Nez is only an integral part of it and thus has the same 'value' as the other components neon lamp, lightbulb and stone. There is no hierarchical differentiation between the body and other elements. The fact that the artist's body is included in the installation does not make it any more 'alive'. The material of the body merely gives an additional dimension to the installation".<sup>4</sup> In this way the body is consistently subordinated to the broader context of relativist theory, for which all elements of a work of art or an "item"

<sup>2</sup> J. O. Opter: *Slovensko pozorišče in njegova rojava* ("Slovene's Theatre Between Two Wars"), *Zbirka založba Akademije za umetnosti* (Collection of Publications of the Academy of Arts), Vol. 1, Ljubljana 1960, p. 369.

<sup>3</sup> On this and other performances of the OHO group, cf. Maja Brnčić: "Urban teatr" (happening) (pages OHO 1966–1967) "Urban Theatre" (Happenings of the OHO Group 1966–1969), *Ateljé*, Ljubljana 1995, no. 1–3, pp. 70–74.

<sup>4</sup> T. Tomaz Brejc: OHO 1966–1977, exhibition catalogue, ŠKUC, Ljubljana 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lilijana Stepančič: "Body Art in OHO", in: *Klaster/Art/Performance: Konceptualno ustvarjanje v 60.-ih in 70.-ih letih (Conceptual Art of the Sixties and Seventies)*, ŠKUC, Ljubljana 1993, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> "The basic concept of the first period OHO (the one usually referred to as the 'relativist' period) was therefore that of 'the thing', 'the object', 'the value', 'fluxus', 'arte povera', 'thing' – term coined by the critics and the public – 'art as happening'." ... The members of OHO – above all the leading ideologists of the OHO return, Luka Čebulj and Mario Popović – accepted the notion of *relativism* as a name of a complex, theoretically based system which does not only define a

specific aesthetics and approach in art, but also affects even the smallest details of everyday life." (cf. ŠKUC catalogues "OHO od konceptualizma do relativizma" [From Conceptualism to Relativism] in *Primož Trubar in Domovini* [Primož Trubar in His Native Country]), in *Primož Trubar in Domovini* (Primož Trubar) exhibition catalogue, Modern Gallery, Ljubljana 1994, p. 10).



Milenko Matanović - David  
Bez - Drago Delibernardina  
(OHO), At Triglav, 1948

("artist")<sup>7</sup> are completely equal. This characteristic of OHO's "actionism" was also noticed by Igor Zabel, author of the retrospective exhibition of the OHO group in 1994 in the Modern Gallery in Ljubljana and in Neue Galerie am Landesrasenamt Joanneum in Graz:

"There is no hierarchic difference between man and other things; man is a thing among other things. Man looks at the things, but also the things look at him. The subject-object relation has lost its hierarchic meaning, as it is general and mutual."<sup>8</sup>

The famous Triglav happening which occurred on 30 December, 1948 in Ljubljana's Žvezda Park also showed that the body is merely "a thing among other things": Drago Delibernardina, David Bez and Milenko Matanović were standing in the middle of the park wrapped in black covers with only their

heads sticking out. Tomaž Bosič<sup>9</sup> recognized a relativistic word game in the three jutting heads: tri-glav (three heads) = Triglav (the highest mountain in Slovenia and the Slovene national symbol). Liličama Stepančić classified Triglav and two other happenings of the OHO group, Kopanje z črnom (Bathing with a Worm) and Počop mumijski (Burial of a Mummy), as "proto-types of performances in which the presented story reflects the transfer of an iconographic theme from the medium of fine arts to another medium of expression."<sup>10</sup> In her opinion, the above-mentioned proto-performances reveal a connection between the OHO group and the experimental theatre group Pupillijska Ferkeverk. One might only add that the political nature of the Triglav happening can be traced to Pugilija, which challenged and politi-

cized public opinion by radicalizing corporeality and through other means of creating spectacles.

#### THE PUPILLIJA FERKEVERK THEATRE: PERVERTS, DIGESTIVES, SADISTS, PROFANERS OF BREAD, LOVE AND HOMELAND

Although the OHO group and the Pupillijska Ferkeverk Theatre functioned as relatively autonomous formations, their mutual influences are quite evident, perhaps most of all in their manner of understanding corporeality. In the same way as Pugilija manifestly and provocatively announced the "use" and not the "representation" of (one's own) body, some years later the Pupillijski as the members of Pupillijska Ferkeverk came to be called soon after their first performances, "used" their own bodies "as such", the body "as

F "Relativ 'človek' (artist) do not spread around themselves an aura of precious, unique objects, attainable only to us artists. (...) They used cheap materials and very often mass production techniques (printing, impressing, casting), the basis for their

"forms" are often very usual everyday objects. They also did not call them forms, such as 'cultural forms'. This is very precisely expressed by the very notion 'artist': 'star' which, during the first period of OHO, replaced the notion 'work of art'. The

wind of course refers to mass production and consumption (i.e. to the world which is the personal context of OHO activities), but it also includes the often-used 'art' referring to the artist's as well as the artwork's way of work." (Bosič, p. 10)

8 Ibid., p. 11

9 G. Brej, ibid.

10 (J. Stepančić, ibid., p. 10)

itself" and "for itself", without any regard for the mimetic tradition of conventional theatre. An artist's body does not represent or imitate another body existing in literary fiction or in the actual, "real" world, but simply represents the "real" world, the artist's own body, in its physical and mental presence.

The Pupilička Ferkoewerk Theatre was born from poetry, i.e. from poetry evenings organized by the group in the second half of the sixties. It was not until the arrival of director Dušan Jevšnikov that the group was radically theatricalized itself. Major shifts were already visible in the performance of *Zlizemo plezam Pupilička Ferkoewerk* (Noble Fungus of Pupilička Ferkoewerk, May 1969). The poetry was more "communicative," "collectivistic" and, in particular, "theatricalized". On an emptied stage the actors and actresses had more space, breathed more freely, their bodies were not squeezed in between the scenery and the costumes. Their skin became the scenery, as a reporter imaginatively put it, and so Pupilička suddenly found itself on a parallel track with the famous Living Theatre, which aroused considerable attention in Slovenia as well.<sup>11</sup> One may well agree with the opinion of theatre critic Vens Taufer, who noted that the group's next and crucial performance, *Pupilička, pape Pupilička po Pupilički* (Pupilička, Pape Pupilička), October 1969,

announced a crisis in (or even, as Taufer fatalistically wrote, the death of) the "literary theatre in Slovenia, functioning solely on aesthetics".<sup>12</sup> The performance was built on a counterpoint of ritualistic, media-dictated ideology and a simple, yet alienated (in the sense of Brecht's concept of the *Verfremdungszauber*) representation of daily body techniques. These are most evident in the scene in which a young woman is breast-feeding an adult male, in the masturbation scene and in the second-but-last scene of bathing in a tub. The final scene, in which a chicken is ritually "sacrificed", received most critical response<sup>13</sup> and secured the Pupiličkicks a place in the history of Slovene theatre as "those who slaughtered chickens."

The performance of Pupilička, pape Pupilička po Pupilički (Pupilička, Pape Pupilička)

and Pupiličkicks) represented a turning point which, on the one side, radically denied the poedramance of literature over other elements of theatre discourse and, on the other side, transparently, yet still somewhat naively, put the status of the body in theatre in the foreground. The actions of Pupilička Ferkoewerk did not conceal the influence of the media on their own "subjectification," nor their captivity in daily body techniques, which they simply repeated and represented (be)don(e) the public in the auditorium. And precisely this unbearable ease with which the Pupiličkicks demonstrated the techniques of their own bodies, transforming them into social, socially controlled bodies, was that neoracial point, that brave gesture which cut deep into the self-satisfaction and untouchability of the institution of theatre. This gesture should, naturally, be envisioned within the broader social context, which was emblematically called sexual revolution and was an integral part of the student revolution of the late sixties. And perhaps one of the rare battles won by the student movement in the Slovene theatre was precisely the "legalization" of physical theatre.

Where are the borders of stage (re)presentation? This was the question that, at least from today's perspective, could be read straight from the lines of the "manifest" performance of Pupilička Ferkoewerk. Did theatre cease to be the stage when the body appeared on the stage in its elementary biological form, in its direct and consistent physical presence? One would scarcely dare to say that this was only a means of expanding the borders of theatre as a medium, that theatre as an institution of the artistic symbol system sucked in the body techniques which we spontaneously, in the manner of evidences, link with other symbol systems of society.

#### PROBLEMI MAGAZINE: ILLUSION OF THE "LIBERATED BODY"

Perhaps the Pupilička Ferkoewerk Theatre really was somewhat naive and unrestrained, not clearly conceptualized and self-reflected (as opposed to the GHO group, which even managed to

"establish" itself in theory), yet the daughter of a chicken and the accentuated corporeality in their performances coincide with the exposure of the theme of corporeality in the performances of a Viennese circle of radical performers. The ritual sacrifice of animals in the *Örgien Mysterien Theater* of Hermann Nitsch, a member of the reputed Wiener Aktionskunst group, is reminiscent of the ritual slaughter of a chicken in Pupilička's performance. There was much talk in Slovenia of Günther Ritsch, also a representative of Viennese actionism, who became famous for his horrifying performances in which he crippled and tortured his own body.<sup>14</sup> Pupilička's director, Dušan Jevšnikov, was a member of the editorial board of the magazine *Problemi* (*Problems*), in which he wrote about the crisis of institutional theatre in Slovenia. It is interesting to note that his article "Štiri elementi krize sodobnega gledališča" ("Four Elements of Crisis in Contemporary Theatre") was directly followed by a short text, "Tele" ("Body") by Bastko Močnik, in which the author states that "the liberated body is not an Artaudian "Mérography" and that in the horizon of materialist theory, faith in the liberated body is only an illusion. The body is allowed to appear as a body, it is admitted into the collective economy which gives it 'corporeality': there is no more powerlessness, because it is allowed and (which means the same) needed. The body has acquired its physical essence, and imperialism has thus colonized yet another wilderness." The body has thus become functionalized, it is no longer the "property" of the individual, "but the property of a system, a public and common good."<sup>15</sup>

Part of the theoretical context created by *Problemi* in that period were contributions dealing with the position of the body in the net of social systems. An example of such writing was the essay "Tekma kultura in sociologija" ("Physical Culture and Sociology") by Eseko Petrović, in which the author reflects on the term "physical culture" from the aspect of the socialist system. According to Petrović, this "disputable term" appeared in the Yugoslav environment as a translation of the Russian

11 The living Theatre gave several performances in the former Yugoslavia.

12 Cf. Vens Taufer, "Kriptotekstna glasba s kritikom Pupilička, pape Pupila po Pupilički" (Experimental Theatre in Kritique: Pupilička, Papa Pupila and Pupiličkicks), *Audi-jaz*, Ljubljana 1969, no. 22, p. 63.

13 The most heated responses came from Šaga Jelžin ("Ta ta ga!"), what is it about?", *Delo*, Ljubljana 1969, 4 November, p. 5; John Smiljanić ("Doveden ali nezvezni ratnik") ("Liberated or unachieved revolutionary"), *Delo*, Ljubljana 1969, 3 November, p. 5. The latter preferred "In the name of white, certainly fed chickens", beginning his article by naming the cruel fate that has confronted him with modern-day bathhouses in a local theatre: "To hell with you, members of the art-hating group Pupilička Ferkoewerk. I hope I never meet you, green overfed slobs, young and all-knowing cocks, profane of bread, love and homeland, perverts, degenerates, sadists,..."

14 An extensive report on this subject was published in 1970 in the journal *Problemi* (*Problems*), p. 55, which was the bulletin of some avantgarde movements in Slovene theatre at the time.

15 Cf. Bastko Močnik, "Tele" ("Body"), *Problemi*, Ljubljana 1969, no. 76, p. 12 sq.

**"The body is allowed to appear as a body, it is admitted into the collective economy which gives it 'corporeality'; there is no more perversion, because it is allowed and (which means the same) needed"**



The Pupilla Ferkenov Theatre  
Pupilla, Pepe Pupilla and  
Pupillchicks, 1969

južeskaja kultura. In English, physical culture designates a movement endeavouring to shape the body, or, in other words, "body building." Only in East Germany did the word *Körperkultur* have a meaning similar to *južeskaja kultura*, which "simultaneously means a physical culture movement and a means for organising and politicizing the masses." In West Germany, says Petrowit, *Körperkultur* meant the same as *Körperpflege* or body care. But in the environment in which Pupilla was born, physical culture meant a great deal more: "The term physical culture is understood to mean a network of social relations and processes and a pool of social achievements in the field of body care, of a hygienic and entertaining nature, attained through education and breeding, which influence the physical and spiritual development of individuals, the development of their motion apparatuses and the adaptation of these apparatuses to universal human needs in given circumstances for the purpose of developing social life." That is why physical culture traverses the fields of the natural and social sciences: "While the term 'physical' points to the laws of physics and other natural laws governing the human organism, the term 'culture' points to the variety of spiritual processes and achievements of human beings which determine their behaviour."<sup>15</sup>

In his essays on action and acting techniques, which were regularly published in the *Problem* magazine, Samo Simčič emphasized the role of corporeality as a key category of the art of acting. "Most essential for theatre is the presence of the actor's body, that is, the living presence of reality and possibility," wrote Simčič in a style revealing his knowledge of contemporary flows in the theory of theatre. The presence of the actor's body is caught in the social milieu which determines the horizon of his experience. "The actor draws material for the creation of a role, image, or better, for the creation of a score of all the actor's reactions from his real experience, i.e. the experience of a certain social milieu which attracts and demands a certain form of sociability suited to its logic. In the act of a play, this experience is reflected in

the actor's body, it sadiates from the live realisation of the image dictated by the collective experience of a certain social milieu."<sup>16</sup> The tension in the actor's body is caused by the very tenor of the social milieu forcing upon us "the attitudes which belong to history and are incapable of maintaining contacts with the will of the organism." For Simčič, the body in theatre is "an elementary instrument of the play," it is a specificity of theatre and for this reason he is interested in the play's "sedimentation in the body and the *prieti* conditions of its course."<sup>17</sup> Though Simčič normally does not speak of body techniques, he does use the similar term body attitudes (Brechtian *Haltung*) and thus *de facto* defends Barba's thesis of a body that liberates itself from the stereotypes of daily body attitudes with the help of extra-daily body techniques. A body that manages to free itself of the body techniques acquired during the process of socialization becomes a liberated body capable of fully expressing its organic nature: "the moment such an organic act occurs is called a total act."<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to Simčič's understanding of body attitudes, the Pupilla Ferkenov Theatre theatricalized the body in the manner of a double play. On the one side, Pupilla produced the effect of scandalizing the audience by confronting it with the illusion of a liberated body, a body allowed to practice the body techniques of daily life on stage, and thus liberated of conventional theatrical body techniques. This move constituted Pupilla's different approach towards the governing convention of body techniques on the stages of traditional theatres. On the other hand, the Pupillchicks did not produce the utopian total act in which, according to Simčič, the body comes alive in its "biological essence" (in the sense of the supposed apriorism of body functions), but simply represented the body techniques (and, of course, various other standardized patterns) of their own social milieu. Because they were doing this on a stage where every object, every body and every gesture or word had the character of a sign which, in Peirce's words, "represents something to someone," they consequently aroused discomfort in that part of the

15 Cf. Andrija Petrowit, "Južeskaja kultura in sovjetskoj fizicheskoj kultury i vospitaniyu," *Fizicheskij kultura i Sotsial'*, Preprint, Zagreb 1970, no. 89-90, pp. 36-40.

17 Cf. Samo Simčič, "Glezbolje je izrazjuju socijalne odnose," *Theatre in a Context of Social Milieu*, *Problem*, Ljubljana 1969, pp. 63-64, p. 26.

18 Cf. Samo Simčič, "Theatralische sprache (Mitarbeiter)" (Study of Acting Techniques), *Problem*, Ljubljana 1970, pp. 89-90, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 28.



The Pupplica (Performer) Theatre  
Pupplica, Paper Pupplica and  
Pupplicicks, 1988

audience which still supported the linear and oversimplified formula of the theatre as the mirror of society. Such an effect on the audience was possible only because the daily body techniques practised on the stage still represented a radicalization of physical theatre.

#### THE NINETIES: PHYSICAL OR NONPHYSICAL THEATRE?

As discussed above, in the late sixties and early seventies the neo avant-garde groups OHD and the Pupplica Performer Theatre put on the agenda the issue of corporeality in theatre and performances. This concept was partly maintained in the early seventies by the experimental theatres Glej, Pelkarna and Nomenklatura, while in the late seventies and early eighties it was revived in performances stimulated by the opening of the SKUC Gallery in Ljubljana in 1978. Corporeality was only constituted in a developed and thus conceptualized form in the eighties, when it was accepted and treated as such by theatre critics. The late eighties and early nineties were charac-

terized by the rise of Minimalism and the conventionalization of the body in (the so-called independent) Slovene theatre, while the late nineties gave rise to utopian attempts at surpassing the physical and biological limitations of the body in theatre and performances. It should be emphasized that similar tendencies can be traced as early as in the period of the historical avant-garde when the process was stimulated by accelerated modernization and industrialization, and today by automation and computerization.

The paradox of the body in theatre lies in the fact that it is, on the one side, the most exposed and, according to some theories, the only inherent element of theatre as a body art, yet at the same time its most vulnerable, transitory and most unreliable component. The body techniques of modern theatre are nourished by the achievements of daily practices (jogging, body building, fitness, various methods of body relaxation, etc.), as well as by the body techniques accumulated throughout the history of physical theatre. Yet the social imperative of perfectionism

places high demands before contemporary theatre avant-gardists, which even the most trained body is unable to satisfy on stage. For this reason, some of them are (once again) turning to the never-finished project of nonphysical or bodiless theatre, which could perhaps be realized either in computer-supported virtual reality or in the zero gravitation environment. Just as the development of technology is unpredictable, the direction in which (technological) concepts of corporeality will develop is also quite foggy, and it is hard to say what will actually happen to the body in contemporary Slovene theatre. Nevertheless, the neo avant-garde practices in Slovene theatre and conceptual art of the late sixties and early seventies explored and questioned these issues in a manner suited to the times in which they were born and, on the other side, so provocative and investigative that they still deserve our attention today.

*Ado Pichler is a member of the editorial board of *Frakcija**

Translated from the Slovene by Bozena Starek

**RETRO & THE EAST**

DEJAN KUŠIĆ (AKRZIN/BASTARD)

# Death for a Death



*Art is a ritual of the past in the affirmation of depth as the dynamic element within life.*

Programme of the IRWIN group, April 1984

*Art represents a RETRO ritual in the affirmation of eclecticism as the dynamic element within the nation's culture.*

IRWIN, Vika 1985



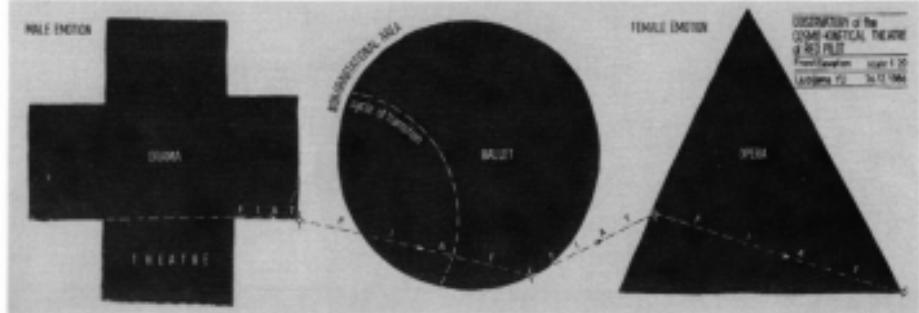
Lubomík, výstava výrobek, 1985

2.  
Death is definitely one of the last secrets. Different religions have tried, each in its way, to incorporate into their symbolic system what cannot be symbolized, to weave into their narratives what cannot be told. But the acceptance of the narrative, of the Tibetan Book of Dead for example, depends on accepting all sorts of other ways of understanding, of rules and laws of a particular religious system.

It is Marquis de Sade who, via Lacan and Žižek, informs us of the difference between two deaths: the natural death is a part of the natural process of coming into being and dissolving, the element of the circle of life, of the constant change, of the progress of destruction and regeneration, while the absolute death is the negation of this circle. Lacan makes out the difference between the real (biological) death and its symbolization, the settling of the accounts, the fulfilment of the symbolic destiny. This other, absolute death thus always represents the destruction of the symbolic universe, of the network of signifiers. It is the death even the dead fear.

These two deaths do not necessarily appear in the same order. J. B. Tito, for example, had first died his natural death and then almost a decade later he died symbolically. Some, on the other hand, first die symbolically and continue living as on-deads, as zombies, waiting for nature to do the job.

In a way, everybody has to die twice.



## 2.

*Art presupposes personality and the right to differ; freedom in this world, in reality totalitarian regimes demand obedience, equalization in the name of a dogma that "transcends" reality. This is why art and totalitarianism are mutually exclusive, because totalitarian regimes abolish this precious and revolutionary individual freedom art fosters.*

Vera Herbart-Pitarić, From Kitsch to Sterility

Art and totalitarianism are not mutually exclusive; totalitarian regimes abolish the illusion of revolutionary individual poetic license. LÄUFACH KUNST is the principle of a conscious rejection of personal taste, beliefs, judgments (depersonalization of the author), and of a voluntary acceptance of the ideology, i.e. the role of the ideology of the awelling and recuperation of the regime transwirtegen / régime postmodernism...).

First Article of the Läufach Covenants, Tribevje 2880.

When in the early 1980s the students in the art history seminar showed their professor Vera Herbart-Pitarić some of the SWIND works, she just shook her head: *Anachronism, anachronochronism!* We could perhaps disapprove of her lack of sensitivity, but we cannot deny the logic of her historical classifications.<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt [still in progress] at classification, a retro and/or anachronistic consciousness - with its ideas of "unoriginality," copying, replicating, quotation, establishing relations with the past, etc. - could in the broadest sense be taken to include into its spiritual framework Carlo Maria

Mariari and the Italian neo-mannerists, Romar and Melamid and the so-called Braco Dimitrijević's appropriation of paintings from the gallery depots for his Triptichos Post Mitternacht (1976 ff.), Đorđević and SWIND's retro(awant)gardism, Jenny Holzer's trutainment, Cindy Sherman's reproductions of mass media (feminist) stereotypes, Walker Evans' and Edward Weston's replicating of old photographs, Sherrie Levine, etc.

Was it retrogardism, then?

Läufach explains it in this way: Läufach Kunst denotes the end of a period of moving, searching, the end of stylistic and aesthetic inventions. As the Sigmilians used to whisper to us, this is about art from art, a lordelation where the model of cultural re-fashioning is no longer nature, but culture as factual nature.

It is the pop art, Warhol-like idea of identifying with other styles that constitutes the basis of the retro principle (Everyone who thinks Tatjana Gorchakov's *Daught & Tatjana Gorchakov*?)

In this way art becomes a *minness af o mimer*, and its function is presented as a metalinguistic questioning of previous artistic experiences (*Was ist Kunst?*)

Retro is not an artistic period and is not constituted as an artistic style, but as an operative artistic principle that in its very name sums up the characteristic feature of a period during which it came into existence, the period denoting the end of stylistic and aesthetic inventions.<sup>2</sup> The retro principle does not recognize the ideas of consistency and individual style. Together with the affirmation of eclecticism, it also denotes the end

of originality. The idea of artistic theft is ontologically derived in retrogardism. Retro presupposes not only appropriating other artists' artistic tongues, but also directly incorporating motifs from other art works into one's own, i.e. "signing" complete works of art taken from a near or distant artistic past. In this way, the retrogradists are manipulating ideas that had been introduced into art theory by the Italian formalists at the beginning of the century - the idea of relativity of values and meanings of artifacts in the changing historical contexts, i.e. they practice the trade of Bergen's Pierre Reverdy, the author of *Don Quixote*.

What differentiates, or which specific quality distinguishes, retrogardism from anachronistic painting? In her text "Alice In Culturescapes"<sup>3</sup> Nena Dimitrijević says: Replicating, copying, imitating the styles of the past have become commonplace in the art practice of the eighties. At one end of this phenomenon is anachronism, exploiting everything from monasticism and late Renaissance to classicism and the nineteenth century. The father figure of this tendency is without doubt Carlo Maria Mariani, who, in the midst of the purism of the early seventies, had at least to be credited for declothing the melonkown trend. But, when he paints today, as if he were J.-L. David, painting becomes only a rhetorical device devoid of references, a mere symbol of ahistoricity. Abstract form any signifying system or symbolic code, it serves only to elicit nostalgic reflexes in the viewer and to answer his longing for sentimentality and kitsch.

What is characteristic of and important for retrogardism<sup>4</sup> is precisely the existence of this signifying system or symbolic code, of what Lacan's followers call the big Other and it is to be found

1 In the late seventies, within what would be termed postmodernism, from literature and architecture to painting and Hollywood - different - voices of a kind of art that refers and uses different forms of stages than the models from the warehouse of art history. This idea, that "books make not the world, but other books," that every story contains another story, the idea that art is no longer

based on nature but on historical models, finds its foothold, precursors and models not only in theory but also in the artistic practice as well, from Bruno Munari through Berger to Rauschenbach and others. In 1979, the Museum organized the exhibition Art about Art, while at that time even Andy Warhol, whose painting oeuvre consists almost entirely (excluding the portraits) of repeat-

ing other visual artifacts' templates, creates new works from his own old works in the Retrospective and Review series.

2 The retro/green/purple unites various radical artistic responses to the "crisis of the bourgeois concepts of the world/city". The attack on the institution of art (Bauhaus, ready-mades (Duchamp); drawing upon

classical material (Picasso); against the idea of an autonomous status of art (the avant-garde); mode-individual nature of art (pop art, Warhol); artistic practice as the healing of national traumas (Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer...)

3 Nena Dimitrijević, "Alice In Culturescapes," Flash Art, no. 119, 1988.



Sculpture by Karel Neudek, *Hercules*, 1985

exactly in the emphasized conscience of the political nature and ideological role of all art. While the Italian anarchist artists celebrate/reproduce canons of beauty of the Ancients, Renaissance and classical art in the spirit of cultural pessimism not asking any unnecessary questions,<sup>7</sup> the Eastern European retrogradists deal primarily in the art practices of the twentieth century - on the one hand, the tradition of the avant-garde, and on the other, Nazirkunst and socialist realism - i.e., in what is usually bracketed under the collective term art of the totalitarian regime.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike a large part of contemporary art which takes mass-art and kitsch for its model and material, that uses int. templates and patterns (memes, postiche, mimetic) forms, ready - art, from art, simulation, recycling, etc.) and works with pathos and the transparent symbolism of past styles, and

with the triviality of their subject matter and materials, retrogradism goes a step further and deals - together with all of this - primarily with the political nature and the ideological role of all art. In this way, it exits the inter-esthetic, anti-art field and gives up the understanding typical of the formalist theory which constantly repeats that the theme is only the occasion for the painting, that Oberzine and Sonder's opales are not important as opales, and not only were they not important as opales, but that they were important to neither Oberzine nor Sonder...<sup>9</sup> In spirit, tendency, ideology, and not in form, it represents a continuation of the avant-garde's explicit interest in the social [political, ideological] role of art.

If the task of Nazi art was to make "ideology perceptibly apparent and se become real and active,"<sup>10</sup> does that not state clearly and openly

what art in general is, what it does in every time? For that reason, the Neue Slaveische Kunst sees Naz art as the ideal projection of all art. They see Naz troopers of ideology and socialist realist engineers of human souls as the first postmodern artists - Industry workers who produce economic and social commodities. Sometimes it is enough just to glance at a copy of *Flash Art* or *Art Review* (the titles already give away how integrated into a world of spectacle, marketing, department stores and political meetings an artist is) to realize that art is a commodity and that it accepts, something willingly and sometimes with a bad conscience, such a position. In other words, in modernism, art is understood as utopia, and in Nazirkunst, socialist realism and postmodernism as ideology. In Nazirkunst and socialist realism, and in postmodernism as well, art accepts to be instrumentalized. It is precisely the state of being immersed, of the impossibility of

6 Of which IRWIN and Goran Gurdic (both perform under the name Matavich, David Stein, Andrej Tavčar) and many others. International literature on totalitarian art movements, though similar artistic practices have appeared in other countries/cities of the Eastern Bloc (see art. Irak Baláns, Bya Kubákov, the Prague group Bratrstvo, etc.), especially Yugoslavia, Waldemar Stempert, János Klapka, Vlasto Beneš, Božidar Saturović, Mihailo Čanak, Bogdan Aleksić, Variete in Belgrade, Metropole Trans/Roxy U&P in Osijek, Fotografija in Belgrade,

Rajmund Sládeček, Trix in Šardíne, Rep. Czech in Spain and so on.

7 In the programme of *Borsigkunst* (1982), L. R. Matavich presents himself as someone trying to "escape the climate of critique characteristic of our discredited era."

8 Until then socialist realism and Nazi art works have often (actually, most of the time) been seen only as a valueless imitation, the formalist idea that such works do not deal with the specific problems of

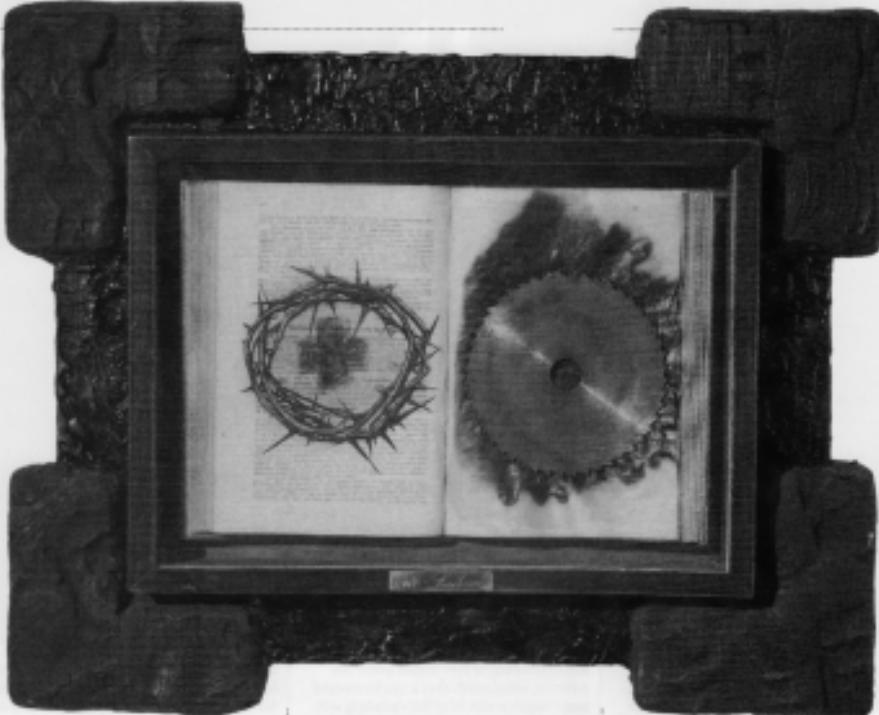
painting - i.e., problems of form, has usually been cited in support of this view. However, dealing with the specific problems of painting, how to find the right balance between meaning and highest aspiration of art by the ideology of a simple period, which can in spatial and temporal terms easily be designated European modernist art.

9 But what of the art of the totalitarian regimes? Do they not (ostensibly) share a much greater ability to primitive art - Renaissance art: absence of striving for originality and novelty; praise of Ideology; a

strong collective mythology; monopoly of the author, literature, on the aesthetic level the totalitarian taste sees the cold performance of classical figures as its ideal of beauty.

10 Walter Benjamin, *Die Kritik des Realismus*, Berlin, Leipzig 1928.

11 Werkverzeichnis, Pionier-Verlag, Berlin, Leipzig 1979.



TRINBY: *A Death for a Booth*, 1987

the work of art to break loose from the meanings already existing in its context and forming the work itself. This is why their strategy is not based on the creation out of nothing myth, but on the metaphorically grasped idea of the artistic theft. They want to be exactly those appropriation mechanisms, those powers that determine the meaning of the work. Here we find also the implicit answer to the question of critical action in the situation which seems to hinder that kind of action: instead of putting the work in the context through theory, it puts the context into the work.

In such a way, Ljubljana simulates the complex whole of ideological state machinery that imposes dominant forms of conscience and takes the social realist rhetoric of the superstructure being produced, as dependent on the economic basis. A complex interplay of mirrors and perspectives is at work here, because they have been produced according to that very logic, are presented as a mechanism of production. This whole game of determinations and of adopting a drastic theory of the functioning of culture serves the purpose of attacking the [modernist] idea of the autonomy

of a work of art and as a framework for the present politics and art discussion.

Eclecticism, a consequence of dissolution of the notion of individual style, of seeing history in a way which caused retrogression to emerge, has gained certain additional meanings in the case of the NSK, that are not to be found in other post-modernist eclectics. They exclaim the implicit features of postmodernism and link them into a system in which one phenomenon arises as a motivation for another. This eclecticism is to be seen on the affirmation of the national culture. Having chosen eclecticism as their leading operative principle, they have of necessity brought about a re-evaluation of the whole tradition of Slovenian national art, which being an art of a small nation was inevitably eclectic. The dissolution of the notion of individual style and the action that includes identification with other styles, i.e. the establishing of the retro principle, are being translated through master and servant metaphors onto the level of national art. In this way, the dependence on foreign influences, conventionally a negative, minor characteristic,

becomes the basic point of one's own cultural identity. The death of the artist as an individual<sup>9</sup> is being answered on the major level through the paradoxical foregrounding of the Slovenian national identity through the German language—Neue Slovensche Kunst.

While for the modernist ideology, at every moment there is only one progressive art material, for Adorno, an artist who does not deal in the progressive material, is regressive, for the retrogradists the revolutionary, liberating change does not lie in a pure change of form or easy introduction of a new material, but in the change of [productive] relations—the relation between the creator and his work, between the work and the audience—of the expanding mechanisms, social relations into which it enters. It lies in the actual dialectics of the content/form relationship.<sup>10</sup> Retrogression is not to be confused with the retrograde. The emancipatory nature of the IROND/NSK or Goran Berdnik's works does not rest upon the covering of symbols, but in allowing Malavich and the academic sculpture, a kitsch statuette or a Gobelin tapestry to be placed side

by side as parallel possibilities. Showing, what is more, that one carries the other.

While the *pointers* of memory and/or learned pattern produce art that knows it is not in accordance with its own time, but wishes to be so on purpose - it wants to be anachoretic in order to be able to stand up for values [if Art and Painting] it finds jeopardised - while they thus engage in simulations, and not in direct copying or quoting, SWISH, using a montage of quotes, replicating, copying, etc., deals in the construction of the history of art, of the history of Slovenian art and of the national culture, not as an organic product of the national spirit, but as being eigentlich eclectic.

### 3.

Popular culture offers an almost standardised pattern of the subjective presentation of death. In films, sometimes in novels, but primarily in films, a dying hero sees his whole life in a single moment. All the images are here, they still exist as they had existed the moment they had occurred, all the emotions related to them are being lived through once again. Of course, it is what in the Middle Ages would have been called good dying, dying that settles all the symbolical accounts and leaves no unpaid debts.

This is what we talk about when we talk about the art practice characteristic of the years of the dissolution and breaking up of a social/ideological project, the time of death of the Communist utopia, when a generation of artists brought up on Warhol and pop art and with a strong tendency towards such an art strategy - still acting outside of the Western system/global art market - started rolling in front of the dying regime's eyes all the images from the collective past: basic images of national myths interwoven with political iconography of various regimes that fought; for a specific field, replicas of state art re-contextualised by commercial slogans, quotes of the modernist tradition of high art together with the iconography of the Philistine, kitsch mass culture...

Why is it, then, that the idea and practice of retrogardism developed most strongly and most convincingly in Yugoslavia?

In socialist societies there was no real art market, so that in the foreground was art's ideological sense, but due to the non-aligned position of art

In Yugoslavia, neither did the dual dichotomy of the official state art vs. the ("private") dissident practices. Even modernism was a "regime" art here, while the so called "naïve art" lost its every original social intention and became the means of depoliticising that suited the regime completely. However, through the alternative, through various youth and student organisations, through the media, through subculture and the pop scene, there developed a possibility of the third way, that was best, most explicitly and most consequently used by the artists of the Neue Slowenische Kunst.



New Collectivism: Poster for a Socialist Youth Organisation's Celebration, 1987

#### 4.

When in cartoons the cat goes off the edge of a cliff but does not start to fall until she comes to realise there is no ground beneath her feet, tells us the same thing Freud said when in *The Interpretation of Dreams* he tells of a dead father who does not know he is dead, and so goes on living. Similarly, the regime in the 1980s had already died, but was unaware of it. The artists were the only ones who spoke out, who could utter the unutterable, or symbolise what cannot be symbolised.

The moment which expressed the trauma loud and clear, the one that made the cat realise she could go on walking on air only because she did

not know she had no ground beneath her, the moment that told the dead father he was dead, only did not know it, was the moment when in 1987 the New Collection<sup>12</sup> designers presented the organisers of Istra's birthday celebration with a work that was an expression of their deepest wishes and their true taste, a remake of a Nazi poster, with socialist emblems replacing the swastika. This was one of the last big cultural scandals in former Yugoslavia, and if after that the slaughter were ready to commence, it is not the messenger who should be blamed.

And it was precisely during this period between the two deaths (1980-1987) that in the art of music (Ljubljana), painting (JINROK), and theatre (Gledališki Senter Štefana Matiča, Rodej pilot), many works of sublime beauty have been created.

Retro[avant]garde (the NSK) has thus been a specific/inevitable form of continuity of the avant-garde/neo avant-garde under the conditions of the avant-garde in power (the Communist Party is the avant-garde of the working class).

Such an art was only possible in such a system, which was perhaps still totalitarian but has certainly never ceased to be utopian. A political climate in which words, paintings, and culture were still being taken seriously. Art still meant something there, being an incitement to pledge oneself to [feminism] and not merely another segment of the market.

When in 1918, Lenin said that to act in the sphere of art is one of the Party's foremost missions, was he not assigning art the importance it has never been granted in democratic regimes? The state artists and the dissidents all shared this belief. The present problem of Eastern post-dissident artists is precisely the general loss of this role and of the faith in the importance and more profound social relevance of art.

And the contemporary artists are yet to answer the question of how to [successfully] combat the art market totalitarianism. One incontestable response is to become radically repoliticised - but being pushed to the margin is the price to be paid. In the sphere of pop, Rammstein - and their market success - demonstrate how Ljubljana's retro[avant]garde aesthetics can be profitably codified as a new marketable style.

Bojan Količ is the editor of the Arkin magazine. Translated from the Croatian by Iva Čorić and Tomislav Držak

8 "Urhich works like a team [collective spirit], following the model of industrial production and capitalist service, which means the organisation and not the individual society." Our work is Industrial, our language political." First Article of the Ljubljana Covenant.

9) The 1987 artists - Ljubljana, JINROK, Štefani Matič - clearly demonstrate that

new, in this moment of art history, the beat of the critical reading is no longer a tragic, spiritual, vision work, but the employe activity of an artist/group, performances, records, paintings, but also organisation, the "artists" image, clothes and banners, ways of media presentation, texts and materials, interviews... the production and reproduction of art.

11 "The retro[garde] is an artist guided by the desire and ability to argue with an unseeing eye the relations of the beautiful, the rare, the exalted, the bold and the terrible in current events throughout the world. The retro[garde] combats using design and all the means at his disposal. He applies the method of the retro principle the way an automobile designer assembles the parts of a car - wheels, the steering wheel, the

engine, etc. The creative processes of informed perspective, metaphor, hyperbole, fine and queer ways, unkind and kind everything that mankind has squeezed from its veins until now. Content and Form are only tools which combine themes and symbols into dynamics, tension, excitement and drama." New Collection, Ljubljana, March 21, 1987.



## Trust the commentary?

EMIL HRVATIN

One of the fundamental questions posed in the post-Communist societies is the status of belief. If to the totalitarian regime it applied that the truth could be read between the lines, the fall of one-party regimes and the opening up of the realms of freedom, the belief in truth also becomes subject to the market relations: we are no longer dealing with a Marxist lie the point of which can be discerned by means of a meticulous deciphering of the text's nuances, but with various conflicting truths. If the Communist regimes have been societies of lies, then the liberal capitalist systems are societies of too big, or even exaggerated truths.

In both examples we are dealing with extremes, and of course there is no one who would favour the former, but the number is also ever decreasing of those who swear by the society of exaggerated truth. Where there are extremes, the role of a middleman, of a reconciler, of an expounder, of a negotiator, becomes apparent. In the media world it is the commentator, whose perverse but also subversive position is most apparent in the medium of television. What was the commentator's role in the Communist societies? If someone conceives of the commentator as someone more educated than the ordinary viewer, and therefore capable of telling him more than the latter really saw, then he has only partly grasped the point of the commentator. The commen-

tator was in fact persuading the viewer that he was not seeing what he was seeing (in the case of details the TV had failed to surpass), i.e. that he was not seeing what it seemed to him he was seeing.<sup>1</sup> In a way, he was even discouraging the viewer from viewing. The capitalist commercial media commentator, compelled to sell the TV time, has to make the most of every second of his performance to persuade the viewer that he should by no means switch the channel, that is become inclined to embrace a different truth. Hence this kind of commentator has to simulate rejoicing in the event, empathise with the viewer and impose onto him a manner of experiencing. The Eastern commentator is a commentator of the gaze while the Western one is a commentator of pleasure.

What of the commentator in the theatre? Has the Communist theatre not almost unanimously rejected Brecht, his alienating effect, and his model of the actor as commentator?<sup>2</sup> Let us first go to the theatre which does everything it can to exclude any alienating effect, symbolise, thus, of course, unwillingly creating one.

### 1.

One of the most interesting alienating effects I have experienced was two years ago in Stratford upon Avon, watching a staging of *Hamlet* directed by Matthew Warchus for the

Royal Shakespeare Company. On the left of the proscenium an actor stood, throughout the performance translating it into the deaf-mute sign language. At first, I thought it was the director's ingenuous wisdom. But then I learned that it was use of the politically correct evasion, when they interpret for the deaf-mutes. In spite of this, I took the silent interpreter for a part of the performance, i.e. as its parallel. What was so special about him? Was it not a routine, indifferent use of mimic signs? By no means. The interpreter, of course, had to translate the complete text, but the way he was doing it included a very expressive manner of conveying the emotional status of the characters in his interpretation.

The performance was rather cold, and thus his pathos-filled mimicking seemed like a commentary of the aestheticised game, an alien body representing the "truth" of what is going on. While the actors were interpreting the characters, the interpreter was "living" them. The relation has almost been inverted: instead of an indifferent interpreter we get a parallel actor, whose energy exceeded that of the actors on stage. Not only did he have to translate the complete text, he also had to switch from character to character, without being able to see the events on the stage. He was literally performing his own parallel Hamlet.

At first sight, it would seem that this is self-evident. Imagine, however, a simultaneous translation in which the interpreter interprets the text being translated, modulating the pitch, changing the intonation and volume of his voice, screaming and whispering whenever the actors shout and murmur... Technically every simultaneous translation of *Hamlet* is the same.

## 2.

Brecht's commentator is exactly the opposite of the Royal Shakespeare Company's silent interpreter. He should lead the viewer to adopt, together with the actors, a somewhat detached stand with respect to the events on stage, assuming a critical position as regards what is represented inside of simply identifying with it. In the Aristotelian sense, Brecht's commentator even undermines the performance, laying bare the mechanism of belief upon which theatre illusion depends. The commentator should be the intrusion of the real into the illusion of a theatre event.

The chorus of classical drama also has the role of the commentator which to a certain extent resembles the one of the contemporary media commentator. It is the interpreter of the story, performing for the benefit of the

community the subject-assumed-to-be-in-the-know. Another instance of commenting imparts for the chorus is that it recites for the audience the unfolding of the story, directing thereby the reactions of the audience. The chorus knows not only what is taking place but also what the moral implications to be drawn by the community are. The chorus homogenizes the audience, whereas Brecht's commentator exposes the class struggle within it.

## 3.

Let us for a moment pause to consider the various roles of the commentator in contemporary society. Let us discuss television anchors and reporters, commenting upon what we are ourselves seeing, usually in real time (live broadcasts). Where in terms of function, could the classical character found? In the most banal and stupid sitcoms, where the variations of laughter and applause are recorded beforehand. Symbolically, the TV commentator, a transmitter of events, is the subject-assumed-to-be-in-the-know. He sees the same thing we see, but either as someone present on location, or as someone whose specialty it is to comment on a certain kind of events, or as an expert commenting upon them - i.e. in the position of the one we trust. The commentator affects the homogenizing of the community in a manner resembling that of the classical chorus, by means of his emotional response to immediate events. It is clear that this is most easily observed in the commentaries of sport events. How miserable it is to watch that chamber theatre television presents us with every time an event being commented upon by someone sitting in the studio instead of being on location. By playing the tape of some of your favourite sportsman's outstanding achievements with the voice of the commentator and then turn it off. You will notice you are dealing with two completely different events. The commentator induces a trance, homogenizing us into community.

The other events being broadcast are less emotionally charged, due to their predictable nature. The journalist commenting on the funeral of Princess Diana, for example, was in a very difficult position, for he had to comment upon an event which did not need a commentary, that is where almost every word pronounced as her body was being encircled through the streets of London seemed out of place. An exception are the unpredictable events, such as an outbreak of war, or one of the biggest phenomena of the end of the century television, reality TV. CNN's famous night images of American air-raids of Baghdad, or of

the first night of bombing of Serbian targets, where in the background we can discern a frozen digital smudge, with Peter Arnett on the balcony of a Baghdad hotel, or Christiane Amanpour in Belgrade in the foreground - i.e. images where we cannot see anything but in whose authenticity we believe precisely because of that - these images put the commentator at the level of events. The commentator is no longer merely someone referring with the rest of us, someone responding emotionally to the events he is witnessing, becomes, through not one of the protagonists, one of the creators of the event, if not the event itself (e.g. Arnett's reports from Baghdad).

The phenomenon of reality TV is an emblem of the simulation society obsessed with the real. Usually, it is the local U.S. television stations with teams on location, who like policemen on the beat, stalk events of media interest. They are connected with many amateurs who supply them with home videos, and sometimes even participating crews as sites where problems can be expected in advance, or using surveillance cameras.

## 4.

To be a commentator on location is neither like commenting on a theatre performance. The use value of the commentator in the theatre is also for all the constitutive elements of the event - story - should be observable from the staging, whereas television, being a medium lacking presence, franchises the commentator. We have already spoken of his symbolic and critical dimension, while his potential for being used as a dramatic means are immense. Enter Brecht, for whom commentary is a means of class struggle in the theatre. Brecht can be diverted of his critical dimension, thus turning the commentator into an entertaining element of the spectacle. But precisely by giving up social engagement, we have in fact lost everything, i.e. we have succumbed to the seductive sole of television.

Let us return to our interpreter of *Hamlet* - having taken his role radically (translate everything, including the text, subject, context and so on), he created a parallel performance. He has retold the complete *Hamlet*, the way Brecht advises actors to tell a street scene: to be inside and outside of an event at the same time.

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Translated from the Slovene by Jelena Pogačnik and Tomislav Štrukl.

<sup>1</sup> The printed media faced no better. In the Serbian state controlled daily *Pozitiv* (Positive), after the Serbian government has consented to the conditions imposed by NATO, a title appeared *Kragujevac War Review*.

<sup>2</sup> The post-Czarist theatre in Russia as a radical social critique, continues to avenge the Leftists, permeated as these societies are by religious and nationalist fundamentalism,

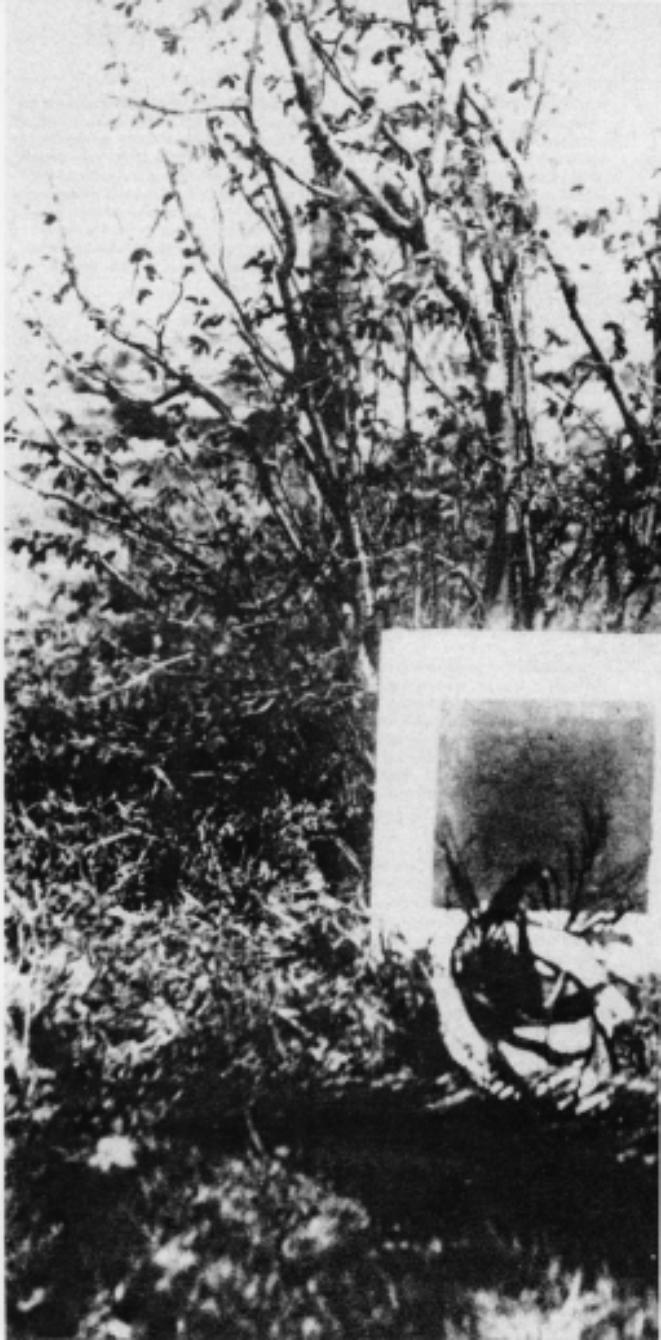
social misery, and the close ties of the politicians with the mafia, controlling the arms trade, drug dealing and prostitution. Not to mention the war... As the manager of Unisport's National Theatre, Zoran Pešić, recently said: "A few years from now, we shall comprehend that in the theatre we have in fact overplayed the *metropolis*".

A "personage" used by Moscow conceptualists is suspiciously similar to a mask worn by a masochist in order to sharpen his sensations. As regards the essence of Violence and Power, that art is as silent as Violence and Power are

## The world of violence

An appropriate victimology  
of Russian art

ANDREI KOVALEV



Makarev's grave



Every researcher or observer of corporeal practices has to understand that he - willingly or unwillingly - becomes an extra in those practices. Limits and properties of bodies can be known only through the results of experimental measurements. That is why Marquis de Sade was finally evaluated in terms of quality of his literary project only in the most detailed researches and in the minutiae of Bataille's or Barthes' essays.

The pair executioner - victim is not sufficient without the pair protagonist - observer. The same can be said of the totalitarian discourses of the 20th century. Entire histories were written about the definition and aims of the Red Empire. It turned out that the corporality of command, an unbelievably disgusting label, at the same time provides an aesthetic attraction: "The Giant on clay legs," it seems, was quite good in itself, so that the study of it has passed from the sphere of the Intelligence service and the FBI into the safe hands of aesthetes, distinguished by hidden and passionate necrophilia. "Vileness is silent, when the mind is endowed with speech." (Georges Bataille)

Greatness of the aesthetic accomplishment of Alexander Solzhenitsyn lies not in the overthrowing of the Soviet system, but in the limited aesthetization of the insight into the abyss of torture and violence. In the honors of Dostoevsky one can distinctly observe elements of pure sadism, while Russian palaces, such as Luhansk, preserved perfect innocence, partially hiding the pleasures from the fulfillment of "their duty to the Party." It seems that the consequence of that inner fullness and perfection provides an attractive corporeal surface, displaying the silence of the executioner and innocence of the Empire of Evil. This disgusting attraction is especially apparent on the level of visual images.

Exhibitions of social realist art in Germany, Austria and the USA have clearly shown the entire vicious attraction of violence and power. The accompanying texts contain the abyss of slander about the millions of victims, hidden by the paintings of holidays and parades, as well as magnificent architectural projects. But all of these excuses by the exhibition organizers conceal the aesthetic enthusiasm for the ethically foreign art. A significant incident occurred as a consequence of the exhibition Propaganda for Happiness. In the halls where this exhibition of "Stalinist art" was displayed for the first time, it was perceived as a queer thing. In the Russian Museum in St. Petersburg, where the exhibition was moved afterwards, it was perceived in an entirely different light. This same irony of the curators was accented by the crowds of

delighted and merry elderly people, whose memories superficially accorded only the images of rejoicing, achievements, worship and ovation. But the widely spread self-descriptions of post-traumatic syndrome are largely pale literary form. It successfully blocks out memories of reality of the secret liaison between the executioner and the victim. Simone de Beauvoir has written in her essay "Is the public burning of the heretics really necessary?":

If the victim does not understand the meaning of what has happened, he or she does not really suffer the torture [...] The executioner gets one thing from the victim: should the victim choose between protest and submission, rebellion or resignation, in each case, the victim would understand that his or her destiny is the freedom of the tyrant.

What did it mean to be an artist at the time of the orgy of Dionysian coarseness, then? The most aesthetic way was to merge with the sleepless, to possess one's body as an object and subject of violence. It seems that the dangerous and irreproachable Überthinge of Stalin's system attracted the Western left-wingies in the thirties and forties. A better way to avoid the violence was to give oneself a serially unattractive look, to pretend to be ugly and disgusting, to mask oneself with shaggy clothes and seals. Then the divine opposer Apollo, i.e. Power, turns away from the violent Mars and does not lay the skin off his body with sabres, ear-piercing sounds.

The monumental figure of the artist-hero that was put on the pedestal by the early Russian avantgarde was carefully eliminated in the second avantgarde period from the 60s through the 80s. For the Moscow and Leningrad artists, the geographical heirs of Malevich, Tatlin and Rodchenko, the sympathy for power and violence was unacceptable due to ethical principles. Sacrifice and suffering of the avantgarde were most prominent in this circle, accomplished mainly due to the bolshievičty tyranny. This meant that there was a strict taboo imposed on the corporeal manifestation of the early avantgarde. The corporeal policy and relation to the corporeality was established, in the many important performances and happenings produced between 1910 - 1916, before the problems have been explored and contemplated. We could mention some of them, such as body coloring produced by Mikhail Larionov, witty and shocking performances accompanying every exhibition of the Russian futurists and so forth. The most radical among the famous episodes was the futurist funeral, organized by

two sisters-feminists from Berdov on the occasion of the funeral of their own mother.

Consequently, the last performance was the funeral of Kazimir Malevich in an artistic grave. By that time, the corporeality had been completely appropriated by the authorities, and the spiritual sphere was left to nemeses.

In the logic of the terror, there was one essential exception. Regardless of the mourning of the post-socialist intelligentsia, much more deviation was allowed to the artist and the poet. Unfortunately, the thick net of the Great Terror in practice did not hold of a certain number of important writers and artists. (Excepting those who were, like Gulya Mandelstam, yearning for punishment as redemptions). Further on, during the entire

period of art's underground existence, which means from mid-sixties, not a single artist or poet was subjected to real punishment. At that time very few among the political dissidents managed to avoid either a camp or an asylum. Suspicions, searching, summons to the KGB, censored exhibitions were a very frequent occurrence, but the underground activists had been in turn given unlimited possibilities of communication with foreigners, which meant having access to a large number of life images and other pleasures inaccessible to the Soviet citizens.

However, the cat-and-mouse game with power caused unified enthusiasm of many people. On such occasions, victim's self-realization of power and the fight for freedom became the basic inspiration for creative work. Nowadays, after the clash with the market terror, many

artists remember nostalgically the almost impossible freedom they have had during the underdeveloped conditions. It is not very likely that an artist could talk to an art dealer or gallery owner in such a hothead tone of voice that was used when referring to Nikolai Struchkov or simply to a KGB captain. In that way, the totalitarian system gave to the artist an absolute freedom of creation. However, the usage of that freedom was so infinite, that it was simply not possible to take advantage of all its benefits.

Limits were imposed only onto the open lyrical forms of artistic practice i.e. to the corporeality. The artistic underground was turned to pure metaphysical production, the constant production of the means of production. A little man by Ilya Kabakov was a result of the experiment with the authenticity, which



Oleg Kalik

was in effect compared to a frightened and terrified autistic person.

Even the socialist art discovered by Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, a distinctive expansive form, was easily reduced to a light anecdote, a cheap joke. Socialist artists were carefully trying to avoid the harsh and dangerous corporeality and piling metaphors.

In the socialist art, the spiritual, dominated over the material and entirely specific form of the carnivalesque body, understood in the terms of Mikhail Bakhtin. And even that body, which is collective and anonymous, is characterized by thoroughly marked individuality and eliminated responsibility. Members of socialist parties and conceptualists dug to the surface a personage in the name of whom all manifestations are produced.

Komar and Melamid pretended to be innocent and simple-hearted artists in their early works, portraying women in an agitating style.

Katalan makes known the sufferings of those hounded by the authorities and tortured by fate, of the tenants of state-owned apartments. On the one hand, these personages are connected to the existential destiny of the artist himself. On the other hand, as a free and contemplative person, the artist thoroughly distances himself from his personage subject. In the same way, a child blames another bad boy for the broken glass in front of his father.

In the end, a "personage" used by Moscow conceptualists is suspiciously similar to a mask worn by a masochist in order to sharpen his sensations. As regards of the essence of Violence and Power, that art is as silent as Violence and Power are.

Only those artists were subjected to appropriate punishments for their artistic activity - Wladimir Mamonov, Sven Gundlack and Konstantin Zvezdochkin, all of whom practised an entirely brutal and existential kind of art in the beginning of the eighties. For example, Sven Gundlack had buried himself in a special hole in the ground, where he tried to keep a diary, until he almost suffocated due to lack of air. All that time, participants in that action were trying to find the artist's hiding place.

The punishment for those artists was a rather strange one - through army drafting, the government wanted to "help" the artists in their attempts to liberate themselves from the exhausting and total spirituality and legitimate the somatic. They could have been listed easily, a psychotic or mental illness being a fictional reason for dismissal from the army. Apart from that, dismissal from the army could be considered as an apotheosis of the practice of body mutilation.

The aforementioned artists almost entirely lacked the mythological quality of victims and expectation of violence so characteristic of the older generation. The last emblem of the USSR represented real bodies without organs, attached to huge life-supporting systems, not having the sufficient strength to sacrifice violence. That was the last phase, the phase of remission, of ecstasy, which used to be so viciously attractive. Bodies of Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, similar to the body of President Schröder, were the bodies of sycophants, destroyed by ecstatic components. Bodies of Gorbachev, Yeltsin and other successors of the last empire are characterized by an essential ecstasy, or simply abstinential tremor.

Democracies differ from tyrannies in a pathological lack of texture. Tyrants are tough competitors to artists, and most of the times they win the battle. Artistic pretensions which occur in democracies witness the growing totalitarian regime. The speech given by Senator George Danzig entitled "Communist Manœuvre to Control Art in the United States" inaugurated the McCarthy era in the USA. In the ontological sense, no corporeality is necessary in democratic governments.

All functions of public sculpture were diverted to artists - revolutionaries and schizophrenics. Naturally, in bourgeois society, an artist has many useful and important goals - to decorate the walls of the homes of the capitalists and to maintain consumer oriented production. Moreover, even when seized by the spirit of destruction, permanent revolution and anarchic, an artist turns into a "healer of civilisation."

In contemporary Russia, the mix of dethronized streams decoded a possibility of public sculpture, direct social action and has shown the artist the possibilities and limits of aggressive and radical corporal practices - paranoid exhibitionism of Alexander Brener, zoophytic politics of Oleg Kulik.

Although the tempestuous heresies of those artists is paradoxically similar to the corporal activity in the West in the sixties, it boils down to the fact that it is possible to appropriate a style of painting through imitation, while it remains impossible to import a life style, which is generated by a similar configuration of economic bases. But this hopeless, ugly and belated schizophrenia requires special consideration.

**In a bourgeois society, an artist has many useful and important goals - to decorate the walls of the homes of the capitalists and to maintain consumer oriented production. Moreover, even when seized by the spirit of destruction, permanent revolution and anarchy, an artist turns into a "healer of civilisation"**



Funeral of Kazimir Malevich

Andrei Kavalev is a Russian art historian.

Translated from the Russian by Marjana Djordjević

# CULTURAL CONTRADICTIONS OF TUSOVKA

VIKTOR MISSAND

This text was brought to life by a hypothesis: an occurrence, which has been given the name of *tusovka* in everyday speech and represents an original socio-cultural phenomenon which has no historical analogues.

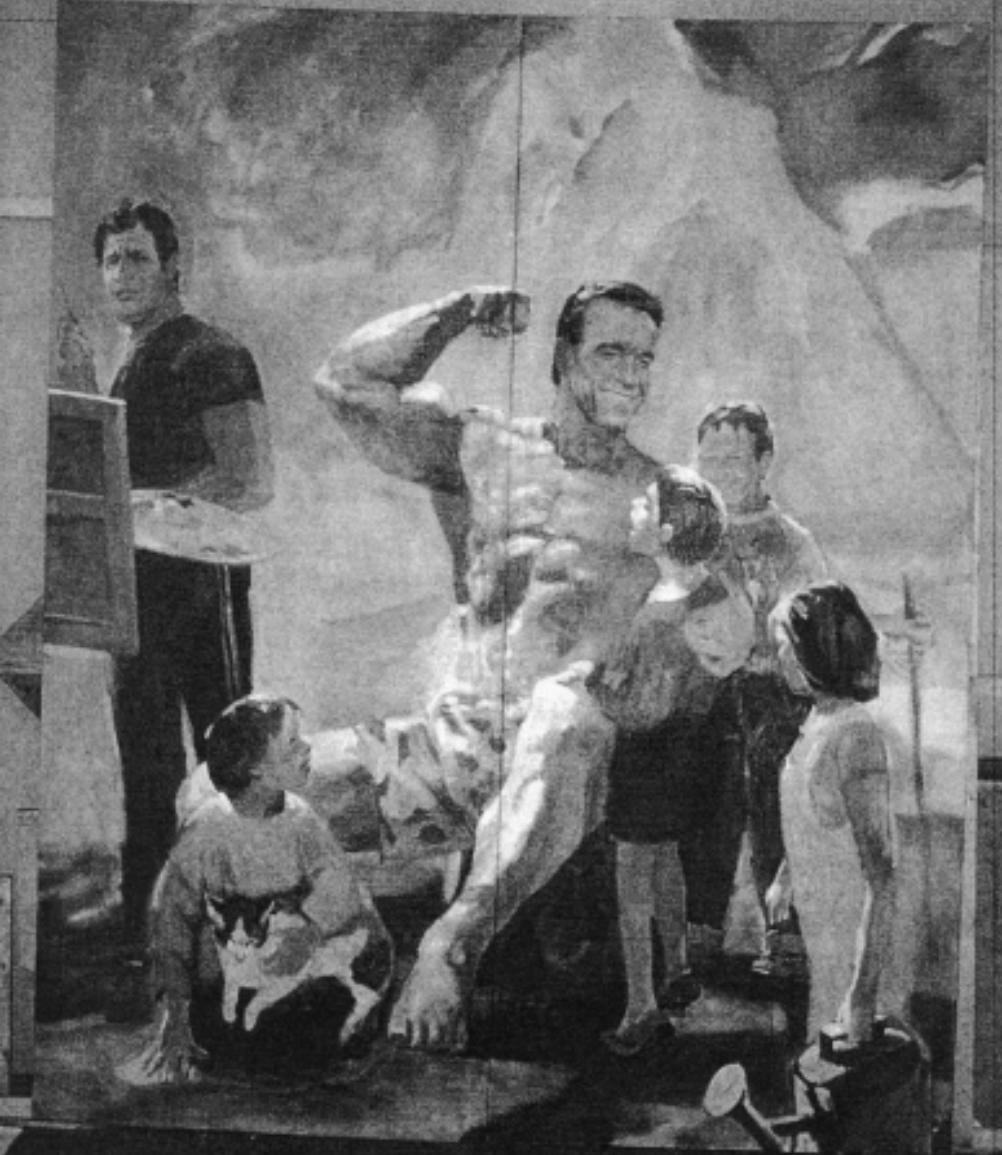
*Tusovka* does not occur within the contours of what is usually designated the official culture. It has come about as a direct result of the breakdown of official culture and its institutions. During its ten year existence, *tusovka* did not find its place in the system of institutions sanctioned by the government, and consequently, it does not want to recognise it as a possible means of representation. *Tusovka* is a form of self-organisation of the artistic environment, in the situation of the lack of institutions and state protectionism.

At the same time, *tusovka* cannot be considered as belonging to the underground, that typological alternative to official culture. Being alternative because the constitutional principle of the underground, which has,

through positioning itself in relation to a larger culture, made its disciplinary principles of consolidation international. Also, *tusovka* is a form of self-organisation of the artistic environment which has found itself without any kind of internal repressive pressure and in the situation when the consolidation based to the principle of ideological control of opinions, ethics of opposition and common work has been exhausted.

*Tusovka* does not recognise itself in bohemianism, a phenomenon which appeared in the 19th century, and which has had its heyday in the stately art in the West, and in the work of the so-called Left MASH in Russia.

Bohemianism appeared as an answer of the artistic environment to the market pressure and social order, when the elite organised its internal symbolic market in opposition to the commercial one, where certain long-lasting and absolute values circulate. (P. Bourdieu)



K. Sollberger and A. Vinogradov/Sylvester  
Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger, 1994

Tasavka is, as the contrary, hypothetically open to the market and social order, and it exists in the constant expectation of buyers and partners.

A distinctive characteristic of tasavka is that it brings together the totality of people originally consolidated not by means of concrete structures - institutional or ideological - but through the prospect of their meeting each other. Tasavka is a type of artistic association which considers itself as pure potentiality. Tasavka is an artistic social project.

#### TASAVKA AS A SERIAL ASSOCIATION

What is necessary for the development of human society? It is necessary that people should stop meeting each other.

Louis Althusser

As a matter of fact, tasavka developed as a spontaneous and free choice of some individuals. Nobody forced them, or persuaded them. For that matter, and no institution or government instigated it. Tasavka developed as Meeting. What is more, since it is not generated by means of institutional or governmental inducement, tasavka remains on the same rudimentary level of human society.

Meeting is substantial to tasavka, i.e. tasavka exists as a result of meetings. Tasavka is a type of serial association. (F. Alberoni)

Developed on the ruins of the institutional culture, tasavka appeared as free and open space in which people could meet, free from any obligations to the past, and with wide open perspectives. Tasavka is sympathetic towards the potentiality of those who meet and indifferent to their past. Therefore it includes as equals those who are art experts and those operating a PC, heroes of the underground and ex-officials. Tasavka denies tradition, it is post-historic.

Owing to the fact that meeting in tasavka lacks any kind of institutional or ideological mediation, it is rooted only in the sphere of interpersonal relations - the face-to-face relations (E. Goffman). Insofar as the meeting originally belonged to the sphere of social relations, the principle of involvement belongs to tasavka: it is unrepresented in its openness and democracy. It is not necessary to possess any virtues or characteristics, social or professional status, in order to enter a tasavka. Tasavka is not a gathering of the nobles, an academy of the "immortals" or a mafia. In order to be in tasavka, one just has to be there. Be in the right place at the right time - at the place where tasavka comes about.

A successful participant in tasavka is the one who manages to visit as many such places in the shortest possible time. Tasavka is a synonym of the disintegration of the disciplinary culture and social hierarchy.

Seen as a substitute for disintegrating corporations, tasavka is an utterly personalized type of association. Freed from institutions, it replaces them with personalized surrogates. Tasavka does not know members, but it has man-mazwana; it does not know expensive periodicals, but it has man-journals; it does not have art criticism, but it has critics, there are no exclusive structures, but there are curators, no reflectiveness, but there are philosphers, no state support, but it has its own initiates. At that, surrogates have absolutely performative status, lacking any kind of verification of production. A man-journal does not need to confirm his status through regular periodical publishing, it is sufficient for him simply to collect materials in his editorial portfolio; a curator is not obliged to organize exhibitions in order to confirm his status (and he is definitely not obliged to organize good exhibitions), and the only thing required from the initiator is to show up at every opening day, holding a glass in his hand.

#### STRUCTURE OF TASAVKA

The structure of tasavka is far from the inflexibility of disciplinary culture: internal laws of that serial association have to be sought in the laws of reproduction of meetings. Owing to the fact that this association is not formed through ideological solidarity and is not produced in cycles, the structural stability of tasavka is primarily guaranteed on a purely psychological level: people meet each other because they want to be together. Through mutual efforts they form a kind of atmosphere, which is equally dear and necessary to them. Tasavka is connected to what in sociology is usually called relative - mutual trust, agreement. (M. Maiercoli)

On the other hand, what differentiates tasavka from the majority of emotional associations (G. Lipowetsky), is that it is not exhausting itself in the task of constructing the present, but is turned towards the potentiality. Tasavka, it is usually said, is higher - it is an artistic social project, it is an association, a presumption of which is a belief that with time - and it will be very soon, it is almost here - it will obtain the recognition of the government, and will be included in monetary flows. After all, reliance - the general atmosphere surrounding tasavka - is (if not for all, than for many) the atmosphere of expectation, counting on it that the mere fact of being in a

certain place at a certain time will, in time, be rewarded.

At the same time, tasavka, as a primarily personalized association, does not have, and cannot have, a general project, because in such a case it would turn out to be a project structured not by reliance, but by disciplinary norms or the ideology of a "common cause." The project quality of tasavka is translated by means of concrete figures, which possess the necessary social nature and stupian imagination.

The characteristics required of the leaders of such associations are different from the characteristics necessary in a culture of bureaucracy, the avant-garde, intellectualism or bohemianism. If a dignitary of the official culture needs access to resources, the hero of bohemianism is inspired by ideals of artistic freedom, and the underground worker by the values of true knowledge, the leader of tasavka fulfills its expectations. The leader of tasavka not only constructs the present, but he also criticizes the association through the hope of many and unbelievable perspectives, consolidated by his always being ready for permanent breaches. Thus the participation in an international exhibition is not merely an interesting project, but also the conquest of the West, and the work on political elections is not only a banal task, but the conquest of the political establishment and so forth.

Born out of the situation of want of a formed symbolic order, projects of tasavka do not have an internal justification, no canonical norms which would have to be followed, no system of values which would have to be paid for, and no intellectual industry which would need to be joined in. The origin of such projects - the troubled imagination of its authors. That is why the projects which develop in tasavka are euphoric and obsessive: they thrive on personal possession.

Hence the paradox of the situation, in which a possible participant of these projects finds himself. All is well, on the one hand, as artist invited to participate in the project avoids complete connection with them: that would signify invading somebody else's personality, working on somebody else's possession (for example, being disregardedly marked as an artist of the X gallery or the iconography const. Y, etc.). On the other hand, the lack of symbolic order does not leave him enough space for manoeuvre: personal distancing from the obsessive project is possible only in the forms of some other obsessive project. A unique possible alternative in such a situation can be explained as follows: to participate in as many projects as possible, which are

suggested by *tusovka* leaders who are as different from each other as possible.

That explains the functional identity of project participants - the second figure of that association, apart from the *tusovka* leader. If the leadership over *tusovka* is achieved by increasing participation of euphoria and possession, the electiveness of participants is achieved by individual flexibility and openness towards the unknown. If the success for a member of a corporate association lies in professional perfection, and for the hero of bohemianism in the meeting with individual experience of the beautiful, for the member of the avant-garde in meeting one's place in the hierarchy of a secret order, for a member of *tusovka*, success is determined by the intensity and originality of his manipulation of strange identical qualities. A successful member of *tusovka* is the one who shows an ever greater ability to internalize somebody else's possession, who manages to unify the strange and the contradictory. In such a manner, the functioning of *tusovka* is nothing but personalized production and undivided possession.

So, contrary to hierarchical and disciplinary types of associations, *tusovka* is an association connected with the centres of energy which govern the social field. That is why the artistic epoch which was initiated at the same time as *tusovka*, does not know artistic directions or schools, charismatic authority and gurus, a single system of values and conventional ethics. There is nothing more archaic or worn out for *tusovka* than the category of shared opinion. *Tusovka* is the most visible symptom of the post-ideological culture.

#### DYNAMICS OF *tusovka*

What commands attention in *tusovka* is its increased dynamics. If the official culture, bohemianism and the underground are results of stable associations, than *tusovka* is a symptom characteristic of associations caught by the dynamics of transformation. Therefore not only the structure, but also the social dynamics of *tusovka* are a direct reaction to the crisis of the symbolic order. It can be said that *tusovka*, which was born out of the crisis of the symbolic order, was doomed, so that every project of its own is at the same time a project of the new symbolic order. At that, what is most natural to *tusovka* is to be in the state of constant expansion.

Thus, *tusovka* is the difference formed between the partial and the whole in culture: a project connected to something concrete is at the same time a general project. That is why a commercial gallery is at the same time a museum, a publishing company, a magazine and so

forth. When a non-commercial centre is being established, it at the same time strives to give birth to a magazine, a museum, an art restaurant and a work association for tea parties.

*Tusovka* workers feel discomfort within rigidly set corporate boundaries, and they have an urge to disrupt the stability of identities. A gallery owner attempts to become a curate, a theorist, and an ideologue, and a politician, and an image-maker. A newspaper critic wants to be a theorist, and a philosopher and a curate and so forth. A philosopher wants to be an artist, and a writer, an academic authority and a pop star. Commercial elements in *tusovka* aim at the non-commercial, and partners are celebrating bestseller sales. *Tusovka* breaks down the boundaries of professional associations and touches the parts which used to be exclusively in the domain of the artists: workers of artistic associations are starting to function in the sphere of architecture, design, show business, politics, new technologies etc.

The situation of institutional and symbolic vacuum strips *tusovka* of the feeling of proportion; it is turned towards re-elections. If there is a periodical art project, it is a festival or the Moscow Biennale; as far as an art institution, than it is, to a certain extent, the Centre Pompidou, and its legends magazines, the Russian Flash Art. By analogy, any initiative can be turned towards internal articulation, but also to quantitative inflation. The project of exposition conceived by mass-headquarters needs to start with 10, and then achieve 50, 100, 150 and 1000 exhibitions etc. In the same way, a gallery owner attempts to define himself in terms of the geometrically increasing quantity of artists, and a radical leader can name a constantly increasing number of his followers.

The phantasmagoria of *tusovka* and the lack of adequate initiatives, and also the characteristic vulnerability of final results further exalts the dynamics and instability. The non-realisation or failure of a project can be accounted and compensated for only by means of another project, even more megalomaniac and fantastic.

Finally, the instability of *tusovka* is guaranteed by its unavoidable internal confrontations. In a situation when any project effort necessarily appropriates the forms of the project of a new symbolic order, the dialogue between these projects cannot avoid the form of mutual conflict. Clashes are not contests of strength, but to the death. When an art center is established, it is supposed to replace another, already existing. Therefore, if two philosophers are present in a *tusovka*, one of them is certainly genuine, and the other

**Developed on the ruins of the institutional culture, *tusovka* appeared as free and open space in which people could meet, free from any obligations to the past, and with wide open perspectives**

spurious, of the two cultures, one is a personal life, and the other a social, there can only be one or two galleries, if absolutely necessary, five, but all others have no right to exist.

This expansion, characteristic to *tausvka*, and the internal confrontation determines its functional difference from other art societies. For official culture, bohemianism and the underground, the external confrontation, and not the internal one, formed the system; the opposite of amateurism was official culture, the opposite of the official culture was the underground. Opposition to the external marked the boundaries of these associations, making not only expansion, but also internal articulation, more significant. Official culture, bohemianism and the avant-garde equally kept their corporate wholeness. *Tausvka*, on the other hand, is a post-corporate type of artistic association.

#### Discourse of *tausvka*

The discourse of *tausvka* is a direct result of the crisis of disciplinary culture. The main characteristic of that discourse is its being incapable of self-analysis. *Tausvka* cannot see itself objectively, and it is not self-reflexive.

None of the figures of this association, which are rooted in the structure of *tausvka*, is capable of distancing itself from it. Thus the euphoric leader of *tausvka* is also incapable of doing that: he considers himself to be the bearer of the symbolic order, and consequently thinks that he is exonerated from self-analysis. The symbolic order is the origin of meaning. It is a pre-requisite for all possible expression. In the symbolic order, self-realisation is fraught with ending and disintegration. Therefore, speaking on the behalf of the symbolic order from the leader of *tausvka* from the necessity to hide the pre-conditions of his expression, to defend it with arguments, to produce proofs. The information is constituted at the moment of being expressed. It is sufficient to announce that, after New York and Berlin, Moscow is the third capital of contemporary culture, and it becomes so, not only in the opinion of the speaker, but also in the artistic community.

The discourse of the participants of *tausvka* cannot wholly encompass the association - a real member of *tausvka* is the product of other people's identities. He is not capable to view his surroundings, because his gaze is directed towards concrete personages of *tausvka*. His discussion is doomed to fail and turn among those personages, to compare them, to produce their opinions, to grade their strong and weak points and so forth. Also, he is not capable of exposing the structural laws which they

have in common, to give them any kind of guide which is not connected with *tausvka*. The name of *tausvka* cannot be avoided without specifically mentioning the members of the *tausvka* association with all their weaknesses and sins. *Tausvka* speaks the language of emotions. (A. Boenett)

In exactly the same manner, the writing of *tausvka* cannot escape the concrete fact of event - it cannot escape some general prerequisites of discourse, but can only be an answer and a reaction. In other words, writing becomes a part of a personalised inter-reactive symbolic exchange, incapable of fleeing its territory. Therefore in the ten years of its existence, *tausvka* did not give birth to "books," only to a few articles in newspapers and magazines which could be collected in a single volume.

In accordance with that, the discourse of *tausvka* is the product of the serial character of the association, resulting from it being rooted in personal relations and meetings. Writing is, therefore, secondary in comparison with the spoken word. The legends and myths of *tausvka* dominate the concrete phenomena, and the reputation of *tausvka* is privileged over fates and work results. That is why the writing of *tausvka*, which describes the work of an artist or the position of a curate, ignores his manifesto, theoretical texts, concepts and published interviews. *Tausvka* looks down on the institutionalization of biography; that is why the artists in that association do not examine the necessities of having systematic files or published catalogues.

Finally, a line of specific points of the discourse of *tausvka* are a series of the post-corporate character of that association: the communication practised in *tausvka* differs greatly from the communication in other types of artistic associations. A text as a speech describing an artistic event does not only attempt to put that event into an existing horizon of meaning and performance, to give it a direction and justification, but also to grasp its euphoric energy. Action consequently does not result in reflection, but in a new action - a textual action, even more euphoric and full of conflicts. Another, no less symptomatic type of writing can serve as a counterpoint to that, the text which is directed towards the internal articulation in a strictly self-sufficient format. An art object results in that case not only in reflection, but in another textual object. In such cases, when the text strives to reach the level of communication transparency and availability. It in the end nevertheless collides with the lack of generally developed terminology and methodological instructions, and therefore the text can only

be anchored by means of the personal I of the author. Hence the partially personalised character of the expression of *tausvka*, forced continually to invoke the authentic ego through rhetorical figures such as I believe, in my estimation... etc. There is nothing more alien to *tausvka* than the concept of the Other.

#### Poetics of *tausvka*

The founder of sociology, Emile Durkheim, concluded that social facts can be viewed as objects, while *tausvka* concludes that a thing (or a work of art) can be nothing but a social phenomenon. The poetics of *tausvka* is, in itself, a direct result of the dynamics of meeting which constitute *tausvka* (which is social in its character).

Otherwise, *tausvka* is rooted in the life of any association: for official culture, a meeting is an ideological ritual, for bohemianism, a meeting is familiarising with the beautiful, and for the underground it is getting closer to the truth. Therefore in any of those associations, meeting is sanctioned by something internal to it, and its background is transcendental. That is why the poetics of bohemianism and official art is based on the idea of masterpiece (interpreted in different ways), and the poetics of the underground - on the idea of anti-masterpiece, and consequently they suggest a material exponent of the artistic experiment - a work of art. That is why a meeting is necessary - a meeting with the work of art. That transcendental background is sanctioned by museums, institutes of contemporary art and the art market.

As for *tausvka*, being deprived of an institutional and market context, it is consequently deprived of the works of art as well: meetings are attended for the sake of meeting. There is nothing transcendental here: the most authentic art forms in *tausvka* are those which master the substance of *tausvka* - the chaos of interpersonal interactions. The time of *tausvka* is not the temporality of a masterpiece, i.e. the time of manusia, history, the metaphysical troubled time, but the time which is here and now. The products of *tausvka* are exhausted finally when the meeting is dissolved.

Finally, in the art which lacks a transcendental background, market prices or values of art, its circulation closed off by the boundaries of *tausvka*, there can be only one meaning - in the form of self-organisation and self-fashioning of *tausvka*. In other words, art in a closed association has no other goals but to consolidate the intersections within that association, and does not recognise art forms apart from those that make those intersections aesthetic.

The self-organisation and self-fashioning of *tasevka* is possible only in those basic forms, and therefore *tasevka* recognises three basic types of poetics. The first one is the poetics of attractive interaction. That means that the meeting is arranged in order to become familiar with some fixed consequence of the events happening in the same place, the pulling apart of which is marked by an escalation of attractiveness and the temptation to participate. Such an interaction marks the temporal rhythm of *tasevka*, determines the regularity of its production, and gives it its everyday life. (Example: activity of the Gallery as *Telgegny street*).

The second poetics available to *tasevka* is the poetics of catastrophic interaction. In this version, a meeting is justified as the act of familiarisation of an event which was not predicted and which is not customary, which happens in unexpected places, outside the points on which *tasevka* traditionally concentrates. These events disrupt the everyday life of *tasevka*, they are established on the catastrophic dismemberment of temporal rhythms; with its deviant and provocative character, they grow out of the boundaries of *tasevka* and its norms. The aesthetic function of that poetics is a constructive disruption of the boundaries of *tasevka*, with the aim of constituting them anew. The norm gains its normative status only after an encounter with something deviant, and consolidation is only possible after an encounter with a catastrophe. (Example: the Moscow actions).

In the end, the third possible poetics can be called the poetics of confidential interaction. It concerns the meetings arranged in an attempt to have interactions with the special, the closed and the intensive. Its temporal rhythm is decelerated, stripped of internal activity; that interaction ends in the result of willing a solution which breaks the flow of events. The goal of these meetings is the discussion of specific points of contemporary art, search for the meaning of the interactions occurring within *tasevka*. In other words, confidential interaction is an effort of overcoming *tasevka* in the act of its self-realisation. (Example: the Hamburg project and the Workshop of Visual Astrology) In such a manner, the poetics of *tasevka* recognises itself in the tasks of transforming, creating and self-reflection on everyday life (Guy Debord).

#### AREAS AND CONTRADICTIONS OF *TASEVKA*

The areas and contradictions of *tasevka* are defined by the very laws which govern it. Since it is a post-corporate association, *tasevka* is perfectly open: anybody can take part in its self-fashioning. Also, since it is rooted in

the sphere of interpersonal relations, *tasevka* is shackled by its informative possibilities, intellectual potential and social mobility. It is limited with the spoken word at the expense of writing. Its horizon is closed to areas not reached by the individual gate, it is capable of having a dialogue only with the local, and never with the global.

Dwelling in the state of continuous expansion, *tasevka* is characterised by social aggressiveness; its leaders announce that their goal is to take power. At the same time, since it is a post-disciplinary association, *tasevka* is not in the habit of taking power; it is full of internal conflicts and it is not consolidated, it is not capable for the system of political alliances and tactical unions. Moreover, even when *tasevka* tries to seize power, it is incapable of keeping it - this association does not like routine and consistency. Power is the offspring of hierarchy, and *tasevka* is an association of networks.

Since *tasevka* is a post-corporate association, it considers as its main flaw the lack of institutionalisation. It relates the weakness of its social authority and the lack of international context to that. At the same time, since it is the association of a post-national type, it does not pay attention to institutions which it inherited from previous artistic associations. *Tasevka* seems not to understand that instead of trying to establish ten new museums at the same time, it would make more sense to reform the old ones, which already exist. That train of thought is alien to *tasevka*, because only an association which possesses institutionalised culture can recognise the value of an institution as such. That is why *tasevka* announces that the establishment of new institutions should be preceded by the destruction of the old ones, as nothing can be done with them.

As a personalised type of association, *tasevka* exalts individuality and its potential. This association cultivates presentation, and the fact that the heroic individuality forces its will on the society, thus producing a reality. It continually makes use of experiences from the times before Communism, of such forms as dialogue and partnership in its concept, one is dominant and the others subordinate. The elite makes the artist, and it is not their partnership which allows them both to bring to life their own artistic and authorial destiny. *Tasevka* does not accept any determination imposed by non-personal laws, therefore it collides with social fashions: when reality gets out of control, the explanation of what has happened mostly becomes personalised. *Tasevka* most often concludes that there is only one guilty party, and that is someone

who is a "talentless" and "submissive" personage who is guilty of the lack of perfection of the association. The humiliating verdict given to such a person is - a *tasevka*.

#### SELF-PRESERVATION OF *TASEVKA*

*Tasevka* attempts to ignore the presence of its contradictions, suspending them, first maturity of the system, by means of which the projective machinery of *tasevka* apparently functions, inevitably shows the professional and social insolence of the members of *tasevka* who have not acquired discipline.

Internationalisation, constantly sought by the catastrophic *tasevka*, will break down the system of simultaneous reputation of *tasevka*. At the same time, forming a system of contemporary art, which *tasevka* requires, requires a serious change of orientation of the entire poetics of interaction. The system inevitably gives birth to a new social subject - the audience, and understandably, this poetics is not oriented towards them.

Like any other association, *tasevka* guards its interests and therefore has a mechanism of self-protection. This mechanism is the main simple and rooted in the very substance of the association. Any effects of real institutionalisation are inevitably levelled out in *tasevka*, and degenerated to individual projects (X's collection, or Y's journal etc). *Tasevka* contradicts any attempts at critical reflection, public expression, social positioning. It is sufficient should X publicly attack Y, and it is universally held that this conflict is mostly of personal nature. There are many confirmations of this.

As an example of emotional association, *tasevka* lives in constantly sublimated potentiality through the euphoric sublimation of promises. However, there is one flaw - it is quickly exhausted. Moreover, this does not mean that *tasevka* has thereby become destabilised: instead of expectations, *tasevka* has found a new reliance, a new atmosphere surrounding it - the atmosphere of depression and frustration, caused by expectations that have not been fulfilled.

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Translated from the Russian by Marjorie Björkvik



## POST-SOVIET RUSSIA: RETURN TO THE TRADITION

IRENA LUKŠIĆ

The technology of the fall of the largest European empire of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a very simple one. It has been described, or even better, predicted, by a well known writer and dissident Andrey Strelenski in his book *The Soviet Civilization*, which appeared - some of it in manuscript, and some of it decently bound - on the eve of the last Russian revolution. Here it goes:

My train of thought was something like this: Will the Soviet state fall apart if our government gives it a smidgen in the area of culture? For example, if it allows abstract painting, prints on unpublished novel by Pasternak, Akhmatova's *Requiem* and so forth. In a word, throw a bit in the area of art and literature. Because, this can only benefit both the Russian culture and the Soviet state!

My opponent replied: No, certainly, the state would not fall apart because of such small things. But you are not taking into consideration how this would affect Poland. Confused, I asked: What has Poland got to do with it? The issue is to have Pasternak printed in Moscow! He told me: If we give it a bit in the area of culture here, in the centre, then further steps towards freedom would be taken in Poland, which enjoys much more freedom than we do. If someone starts blowing in Moscow, then Poland will escape from the Eastern Bloc, from the Soviet Union.

I answered thoughtlessly: Let them go and live however they please! - No, but right!

after Poland, Czechoslovakia will recede, and after Czechoslovakia, the entire Eastern Bloc will fall apart. - All right, let it fall apart - I replied - it will make things much easier for Russia. But, my interlocutor's view of this was rather reaching: After Eastern Europe, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will recede. - Well, let them! - I repeated. - What is the use of these unions made by force? - Yes, but after the Baltic countries, the Ukraine and Caucasus will be separated. Would you like to see the entire Russian state falling apart? Would you like to see entire Russia, which is today the largest empire in the world, suffering because of your Pasternak?

That is exactly how it happened. First, the state gave in a bit in the area of culture (let us mention the publication of Akhmatova's and Ginzler's "lost" unpublished writings in *Nogai* in 1988!), which the brother countries of the Eastern Bloc used as an opportunity to flee the socialist camp, after that, the dramatic proclamation of independence of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, shortly after that, the Ukraine, Georgia and Moldavia, as well as other non-Russian ethnic communities, demanded their sovereignty, and finally, in December 1991, President Gorbachev announced the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the beginning of a new life in the area which had for over seven decades been (self) advertised as a realized metaphor of the Paradise on Earth.

It is no accident that literature has dealt the mortal blow to the powerful empire. It had given it a breath of life in the beginning of the revolutionary experiment, and later it has been reviving it. Moreover, literature and the accompanying infrastructure, represented the only place where this monstrous creature truly existed. Therefore even the slightest twitch was sufficient to cause its collapse and immediate oblivion.

The logistics of the Soviet empire was established during the first days in the month of November, 1917. It was made legitimate by a Decree Regarding Print, by means of which the Soviet of People's Commissars, headed by Lenin, announced a resolute retribution against the reactionary remnants of the past. This body that is, announced that the printing institutions will be subject to imprisonment should they: 1) call for open resistance or disobedience to the government of the working and agricultural people; 2) spread confusion through open slanderous twisting of facts; 3) invite to activities which are vicious, i.e. of criminal character. The Decree was presented as a temporary measure; in practice, however, it eventually came to finite censurship, the unique Soviet literary organization, serial

realism as state ideology and art method, and, finally, to drown the entire process - the Soviet reader, i.e. a new man, who should have no ties with the old world. A Soviet reader would read Soviet literature and believe in Soviet reality, producing it somewhere midway between the text and life.

Thus it is not unusual that the first cracks in the monumental construction immediately induced the issue of the future of poetry, so that, for example, towards the end of the Bolshevik civilization, the newsletter of the writers' association, *Chernogorka* (1920), started a column for expressing views on the future of literature in the Soviet cultural realm, with the country's greatest authorities on the intellectual life participating in it. The viewpoints of the future were, as could have been expected, various - from the dim and gloomy ones to the optimistically ambiguous ones, depending on the subject's position on the social scale and on the social courage of their journalist colleagues. A moderate democrat, academic Dmitry Likhachev, was realistic: "We shall have to work for new people in order to have new literature," he said, and until the new people are ready, we shall have the period of "simplification" of literature and the domination of genres which have so far been more or less marginal to the literary process - revolution, documentary, narrative, notes and commentaries of the events. This period of "simplification" of literature corresponds to the social processes of post-socialism and pluralism.

Poetry and gloom had a stylistic correlation in an explosion of post-modernist literary practice - let us recall a wonderful philosophical novel by Andrey Bitov *Ashkin's Horse*, and the hyper-production (thousands and thousands of verse) of a meta-metaphysical Dmitry Prigov. Here we should emphasize that it is Russian post-modernist practice, because what the West assumes under this label is something completely different. Western post-modernism, as we know, was developed from the deconstruction of the relatively monolithic culture of modernism, while the Russian counterpart to this phenomenon developed from the opposite position, from the consciousness of a crumbled culture and attempts at re-opening of various lost and exterminated channels. Therefore we would agree with Mark Lipovetsky, who typologically links Russian post-modernism to the Latin-American, finding that those two literatures were infected by a desire for word culture.

The long-term cultural isolation of the above-mentioned geographical areas resulted in a fascination by a multitude of languages existing within a language, discovering differences between them. However, while Latin American post-modernism plays with, as Lipovetsky

says, spatial borderlines, making conscious its position between the cultures of traditional Europe, the old African civilisation and the pre-Columbian South America, Russian post-modernism embarked on a quest for a last age (the Silver Age, the Avant-garde, the second half of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s in exile, the Thawing Era). In both cases, the issue is, naturally, the syndrome of deterritorialisation, a frantic search for a real context, i.e. for a consciousness defining one could say, the contours of post-colonial culture. Statements by Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and other authors of two civilisational homelands are very close to the Russian situation. As Salman Rushdie writes, "one of the most absurd aspects of the search for national authenticity is - at least as far as India is concerned, in any case - that it is completely false to assume that there is such a thing as pure, original tradition one can draw upon. The only people who seriously believe this are religious extremists. The rest of us understand that the essence of Indian culture is having a mixed tradition, a mélange of diverse elements ranging from the ancient Mogul to contemporary Coca-Cola American ones. To say nothing of the Muslim, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, British, French, Portuguese, Marxist, Maoist, Trotskyist, Vietnamese, capitalist and, naturally, Hindu elements. Evidently, the ability to take from the world whatever happens to be convenient, and to leave the rest behind, has always been a distinctive trait of the Indian tradition, and today it is in the very centre of the best works, whether in visual arts or literature."

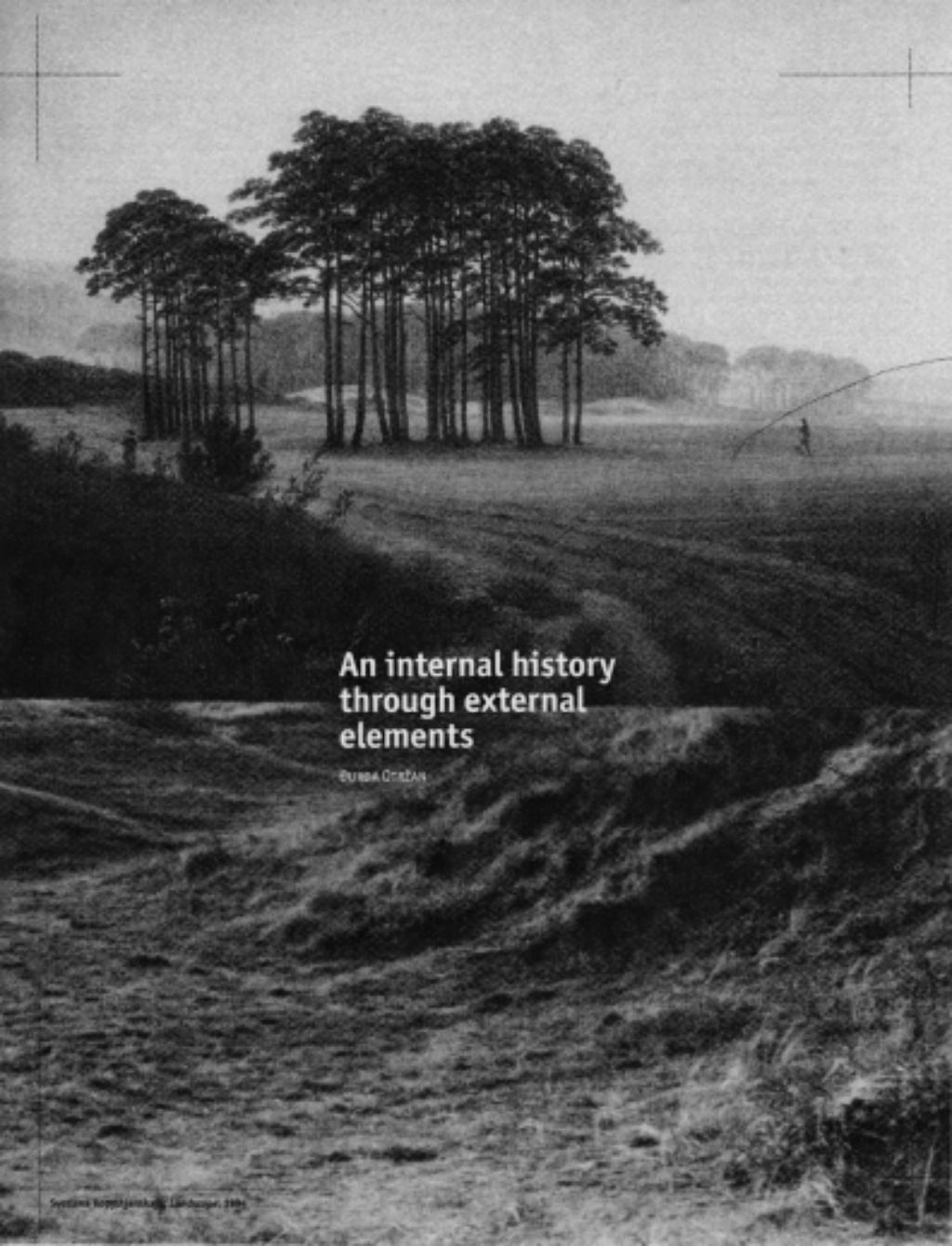
The moment of intersection of different traditions in the Russian post-socialist literature actually happened as an encounter with chaos - on the one hand, the influx from abroad (the exotic literature), on the other hand, the avant-garde and the current of social realism. Various traditions, aesthetic, topical structures and styles, presented as the Russian culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, came out of their underground hiding places, where they have been stored during the unfavourable circumstances as double-coded, "special" texts. "Special" texts were developed out of the realisation that the Russian language has special "Hellenistic" qualities, characteristics of - as Osip Mandelstam said - a sounding and speaking body. Language as body is a monument which, apart from a symbolic message, points out to the value of the material. It is, as Mandelstam said, "a burial boat of the Egyptian deceased, into which everything that is necessary for the prolongation of man's earthly wandering is put, even a pet with scents, a mirror and a comb." Texts by other prose writers, fashioned like an Egyptian boat for the dead, have for ten years sailed freely

through the bordering waters of (Soviet/post-Soviet) history.

The second half of the 1990s announced the renovation of the realist tradition, new jazzes and the experience of a post-totalitarian reality. On the one hand, it seems that readers' curiosity for discovering old and new manuscripts (secrets, unspoken truths and destroyed archives) had been completely exhausted, on the other hand, writers have, as Mikhail Hahnbergov stated at a round table, simply lost their will to play the game of hide and seek which the Aegean language of the official culture provided them with (the poetics of inwards and the exquisite corps parlor game). To write freely has simply become unattractive. "Critics, unite us!" - exclaimed Igor Radov.

And so the variety of styles, poetics and practices of perestroika was pushed off onto the Internet. The global computer network was thus transformed into the only relevant area of reading Russian literature, a point where practically everything created by the Russian spirit, from Peter the Great to Boris Pasternak concentrated after the downfall of the Soviet civilisation. The display of Russian literature was constituted, as we have noticed, on the principle of mirror reflection of the earth-bound civilisation of the first post-Soviet years (the extensive horizontal line), while life on Earth assumed all the characteristics of an anti-world, a world of reversed connections. A proof of this is a noisy ceremony of presenting the Antifooker award (1997) to distinguished experimenters, the post-modernists Dmitry Galkinov, for his novel *Endless Dead-end Street*, and Timur Klibanov, for his collection of poems entitled *Rexphouse*. The prestigious Booker was awarded to a fairly unknown writer of the older generation, Anatoly Aksyayev, for his prose work *Big-city*, which the president of the jury explained as a change of taste, a return to the tradition and firm structures. The strong presence (especially in the medium of writing) such as Vladimir Makarov, Ludmila Petrushevska and Mark Hartman, who are trying to integrate unobtrusively the mainstays of classic Russian realism - a critical account of the society, the existential experiences, the historical frame and the psychological descriptions - into their prose, should be placed and understood in this context. From time to time, a critic dares to write that those new realists are boring, but these are the new people fit for the new literature Dmitry Likhachev spoke of. That is the foundation for the third millennium, for the post-post-Soviet period.

Irena Lukic is a Russian scholar from Zagreb  
Translated from the Croatian by Marjana Javorak



An internal history  
through external  
elements

DUSSA ORBAN

In art, as in life, one seeks what one needs, what one lacks as an individual and social being, what one wants to complete or develop. Most often, it is the view of the world and one's place in it. Whether one has it or not, one re-examines it, and does so in a manner characteristic of him or her. That is most clearly seen in the elements which masters the work of art. What can from the point of view of western education be noticed when, moving from the western tradition through Central Europe towards the East, we approach Slavic creative activity, is the increasing lack of the governing element, and the ever more frequent occurrence of the organising element of the work of art.

Whence Harold Bloom begins his play *Lover* with the words of a husband who, when leaving for work in the morning, thinks of something, comes back to the house and yells from the door to his wife: "A year lover comes this afternoon!". In Anna Karenina, contrary to the Pinterian consciousness which acts actively, Tolstoy has dealt extensively with the consciousness which is acted upon, and he constituted character out of that. Instead of the linear movement which develops as a consequence of the external expression of the consciousness with a clear attitude, there is a consciousness which does not understand almost anything, least of all its own position, and which constantly moves in circles, not knowing where this circular movement, i.e., giving way to external actions, will take it. A contemplative consciousness, which gives form through external actions, in contrast to a consciousness which is lost in the circular internal willing process, without the role of the governing element. Consequently, it is the same thing, only one time it is expressed outwardly, and the other time it is caught from the inside. Therefore, the two methods are completing each other, i.e., they are complementary. In the former instance the character is established in its relation to the external world, and in the latter in its relation to itself.

In Faust, in whom both relations are present, desire for happiness and youth would be a relation towards himself, the internal element which organizes him, and the realisation of that desire would be a relation towards the external world and the governing elements.

If in Chekhov's Three sisters, for example, where the organising element is the longing for Moscow, which is not only a subjective desire, but a group one, someone appeared and said "OK, when does the first train

## A contemplative consciousness, which gives form through external actions, in contrast to a consciousness which is lost in the circular internal willing process, without the role of the governing element. Consequently, it is the same thing, only one time it is expressed outwardly, and the other time it is caught from the inside.

leave?", that would be a balancing, governing element acting in the relation *I - external world*, a Pinterian consciousness, active in a concrete time and based on self-cognizant motives. That would also be a different play, depending on the author's intentions, perhaps even as comical in the exaggeration of that "do something", as in the American version, "what y' gonna do", as is the Chkhievian presentation of a futile duration, which is distinctly orgiastic Gorchakov's Oblomov.

Consequently, it is all down to description, since without a concrete relation which is expressed in the actions, there can be no relations which would establish harmony or conflict due to various possibilities for action. Thus the dispersion of time and place in short fiction, in dates: 19... and in the N-provinces.

But in Kafka, who is so entirely given to the problematization of the mutual relations of external, governing, and internal, organising, this indeterminacy of time and place does not bother one; on the contrary, a certain enigmatic quality of that *where* and *how* helps one to concentrate on the character, subject and plot, expression of the idea.

However, there is a precise mailing location, at least that is how Paul Feyerabend treats it in the *Fairy Tale of the Invisible Town of Kitezh and Maid Savchenko* (1960) by Nikolai Rostislav Karataev, which could clarify the lack of interest in real, external space. Feyerabend, as the ruler of the invisible town of Kitezh, which is a sort of a counterpart to a Central European travelling Grail, writes a letter to her beloved Petr, promising him that he can also find a way to Kitezh, but only if he finds the strength to look into himself, and she sends that letter to Petr's heart. She asks not only that he should master the Grail like Pasevol, but also that the invisible town should be inhabited a conscious being, a being conscious of itself and its entity, as a pre-requisite for the life in a community which is symbolized by Kitezh.

Feyerabend's non-historical message was historically translated by Igor Stavitskiy, so that the governing elements (Feverona, composer, character etc.) can be active only after it has become conscious and get to know its organising elements (character the motives, author the matter etc.), and he was followed by many in that. He began with rhythm in *The Rites of Spring*, while in *Movements* (from the '50s) he attempted to finally integrate the externally intelligible 12-tone method with the studied elements. In a similar manner the avant-garde artists approached their field of work, each treating the element which seemed to him the liveliest: Kandinsky the spiritual, lucis the light, Iettainen the letters, Malevich the language, Malevich the sensibility... there are countless examples.

The allure of the sensitive internal element misled Stanislavski into the extreme of the request that the character be revived anew internally using the emotions or the instinct which organizes it, without studying how to, at any time, repeat the expression of an authentic action, not as a character, but as a part of the logic of a character who not only feels, but also thinks and acts, and is exposed to being acted upon.

A fresh example of the complementary quality is when David Byrne says: "Shopping emotions", and the Russian painter shows the same by painting a dollar sign across Malevich's square.

One says that the internal be understood and shown, the other shows that the internal is seen and comprehended.

Boris Reiter is an author and composer from Egypt.

Translated from the Croatian by Marjana Javorinić



GEERT LOVINK, MEDIA THEORIST  
AGENTUR BILWET/ADILKNO

## Capitalism without Capital

INTERVIEWED BY TOMASZ MĘDAK

### First e-mail correspondence

Q "The Medium is the message". When you speak of the extramedial (in *The Media Archive*), the meaning of McLuhan's phrase is seemingly twofold: firstly, there is nothing extramedial or beyond the media, that is the media would not get the message (their meaning) across in a reality that would not be a media reality, because there is no reality that would not be mediated through the media; and secondly, the message (form) of a particular medium remains ineffable within (the content of) that particular medium, thus it presents itself only in the moment of two media coming together. Thus the media are the message only within media and the media are the ineffable message of a medium. There is a certain coercive movement at work here for a message of a medium to be mediated the step has to be taken beyond that medium. Now, it is clear that a medium mediates (as it contains the forms of) the antecedent media, but can, and this is what I'm aiming at, the logic of that movement (from a form of one medium to the message of another) itself be mediated? In other words, can the media archive itself be archived?

G. Lovink: It should be archived, otherwise it would no longer exist, sooner or later. All archives need to be taken care of. During the entire 20th century the techno-modernist movements have been obsessed with revolutionizing the standards, the computing and storage capacities of the technical media. Engineers were not focusing on how to conserve the cultural heritage which these media definitely represent. Media are self-referential, especially in their stages of development. The fight over standards and ownership is a pain-staking one, quite different from regular industries. If you cannot stand its emptiness, stupidity, if you do not like gambling and debating, then you should not touch computers in the first place. One never knows if an idea or concept is serious or not. Or if tomorrow the stock quote will tumble. So do not even start looking for serious communication, that's a rare example. This is all not made for eternity. Only in fifty years or so will we be able to evaluate all the premises and promises of what will then be called new media.

Q The media are, as it were, on the move. Namely, while the media are all pervasive, they are not total, we do not speak of THE medium commanding the entire media landscape, but rather of particular media. The media on the move bring forth other media and the aforementioned extramedial. So, how do you envision the relation between the media and history, in the sense of media that make history and, more importantly, media as history in the making. G. Lovink: Media, these days, are all partial media, with a promise to reach an ultimate moment of synergy, the medium to end all media. That utopian moment, to invade, and connect all

senses is a particularly strong, irrational, mythical drive. WebTV is a current buzzword for this. The multi-media is a more general term, a universal device to see movies, watch TV, listen to the radio, read books and newspapers, make telephone calls, send e-mails with. We are all familiar with this tendency. Will it reach us via the telephone cable, the TV cable, via ether, via satellites? Will we indeed have seamless bandwidth, eternal conversations? This medium *Gesamtkunstwerk* is creating bizarre structures, hilarious failures, brilliant monsters, sorry microbes that will watch over us. That's all existing, and already history.

Q Now, I would like to turn to media theory. It is rather clear that media theory qua theory is theory in the media: it has no external point of view to resort to. This raises two questions: 1. What is the status of theory regarding the fact that for the media to mediate themselves they have to make a step beyond themselves, that is, whether theory goes, and how does it go, beyond the bringing forth of the new media that is characteristic of the media mediating media. 2. In consequence, how does theory proceed to differentiate (i.e. criticize) particular media?

G. Lovink: It is being said that self-referentiality is a sign of emancipation, the ability to transform from an applied set of ideas, taken from other disciplines, into a higher set of complex concepts and references. I wonder if we really have a General Media Theory these days. I think there have been enough of those attempts being made. I am still in favour of detailed, critical historical studies, going back to the birth time of 'new' media, the period between the two world wars, modernism, the hey day of film, and then the period right after WW II. There is, for example, still too little known about the early history of the Internet. Far many of us this is like a mythological, pre-historical period, dominated by this an image of the behemoth of the Pentagon and the Kristenian premises of military determinism and its cult of secrecy and paranoia. In this story, for example, we will never understand where today's dominant drive towards synergy of text and images into one streaming medium is coming from. The dark world of conspiracy thinkers, such as Thomas Pynchon and his followers, is fully text based and can only interpret the mystical world of imagery (of film, tv, etc.) as a distraction. I am sure, though, that we will free ourselves from these one dimensional, technical deterministic views. They will fade away and themselves become part of the origin of media. Origins and basic structures will no longer be dominant. Media can grow, and transform into something different. More playful, open, modular architectures.

**Q** Where is it that art intervenes in the media-scape?

**G. Lovink:** I am not an art expert. I can only answer your question from the media perspective, the way in which the art system, as a set of skills and irritations, with its own discourse and practice, intervenes, and contributes to the ever-expanding mediascapes. It is said that the visual arts are playing a role in the formation of visual languages, since that they have been released by the high tech hardware laboratories. For decades now the paradigm of the interdisciplinary approach, between engineers and artists, has been in place, yet been unfulfilled. This is the actual localism of all media arts: it dreams of the synergy of all disciplines, all streaming into the fundamental research and development of the technologies, shaping the future of mankind. Only a few works produced under the banner of media art openly question all these parameters, and can be labeled as critical works. With the rise of commercialism, artists are no longer needed these days. Web design has been democratized. And human machine interface design is stagnating too. Prices are falling. Within these developments, artists do not have a special status (if they ever had one...). They can easily slip back into the role of decorators, with Richard Barbrook's Gestalt (ideal figure) of the digital artisan as a maximum option. So I think it is very important for both the visual artists with a conceptual background and their hand-on, pragmatic counterpart of the programmers-designers, to make a realistic economic analysis of the media markets and their ever changing programs and standards.

**Q** You point out that the value we attribute to the concepts of local and global has changed through the heightened importance of mass media. In our lives, do we have to redefine politics? Or, isn't there, between losing control over the community policies due to the focus of the mass media on global issues and the desired immediacy of the internet communities (including the desideratum of absolute legitimization through the e-democracy) just another reflection of modern politics (rationality deficit and legitimacy crisis)?

**G. Lovink:** In today's popular systems of belief, it is being said that the media have replaced, or at least overruled, politics. On the opposite side we see the naive idea that politics can be renewed by the active use of [new] media. But if we just take a closer look at the relation between specific policies of the nation states, or particular parties, regarding the development of cyberspace over the last ten years, we can see a remarkable influence of the state on the media sector. Good, it's obvious that the politicians need to pay a lot of attention towards their mediated image. Who doesn't? Who is not constantly working on his or

her image profile? We do not have to redefine politics for that reason. The activists and their concept of image pollution are just reacting to this tendency. It is more interesting to see how specific technology politics generates different media (or net-) cultures. In some places there is a very direct form of media control, focusing on content and ownership, like in many East European countries. In Nordic countries, we see a much more subtle, structural approach, whereby the state is influencing the parameters, not the actual channels. Deregulation alone won't do the job. It is clear that companies, for example, will no longer be involved into fundamental research. The corporations would never have invented the Internet. Their drive to get an immediate return on investment might even slow down the digital revolution in the long run. Today's innovation of the Internet startup is fake. What is now needed are new spaces for reflection and critique, free zones where researchers of all kind can work without the pressure of sponsors and their managers who can no longer see the distinction between fancy demo design and real outcomes.

#### Second e-mail correspondence

**Q** In your previous answer you hinted at the difference between the media politics in East European countries, where the control over "content and ownership" is so strict, and West European countries, where the focus is on influencing the parameters. Now, it seems that the sort of relation towards the media in Eastern Europe invades us instead (invades the heir to the relation we could observe in the regime dominated media landscape prior to the political changes of the 1980s). The (geo)political, social and economic circumstances have changed though. The media were not left uncatched - some sort of transition is under way. Where do you think the media and the media politics in Eastern Europe go from there?

**G. Lovink:** As usual in "deep Europe," the situation is slightly different in each country, or even city. In circles of the Soros foundation and similar NGOs the predominant idea has been that a legal structure, with democratic media-laws, a proper re-education of journalists, etc., would be the guarantee to have an "independent" media landscape, which would be neutral, proper reporting, thereby overcoming the dark era of ideologies. I am more in favour of less formalistic structures, bottom-up media, with a greater emphasis on creativity of individuals. Of course, it remains important to fight state censorship. But the answer does not lie in the neo-colonial structures of the Berlusconi's, CNNs, Bertelmanns, etc.

**Q** What is the role of the so-called new media in Eastern Europe?

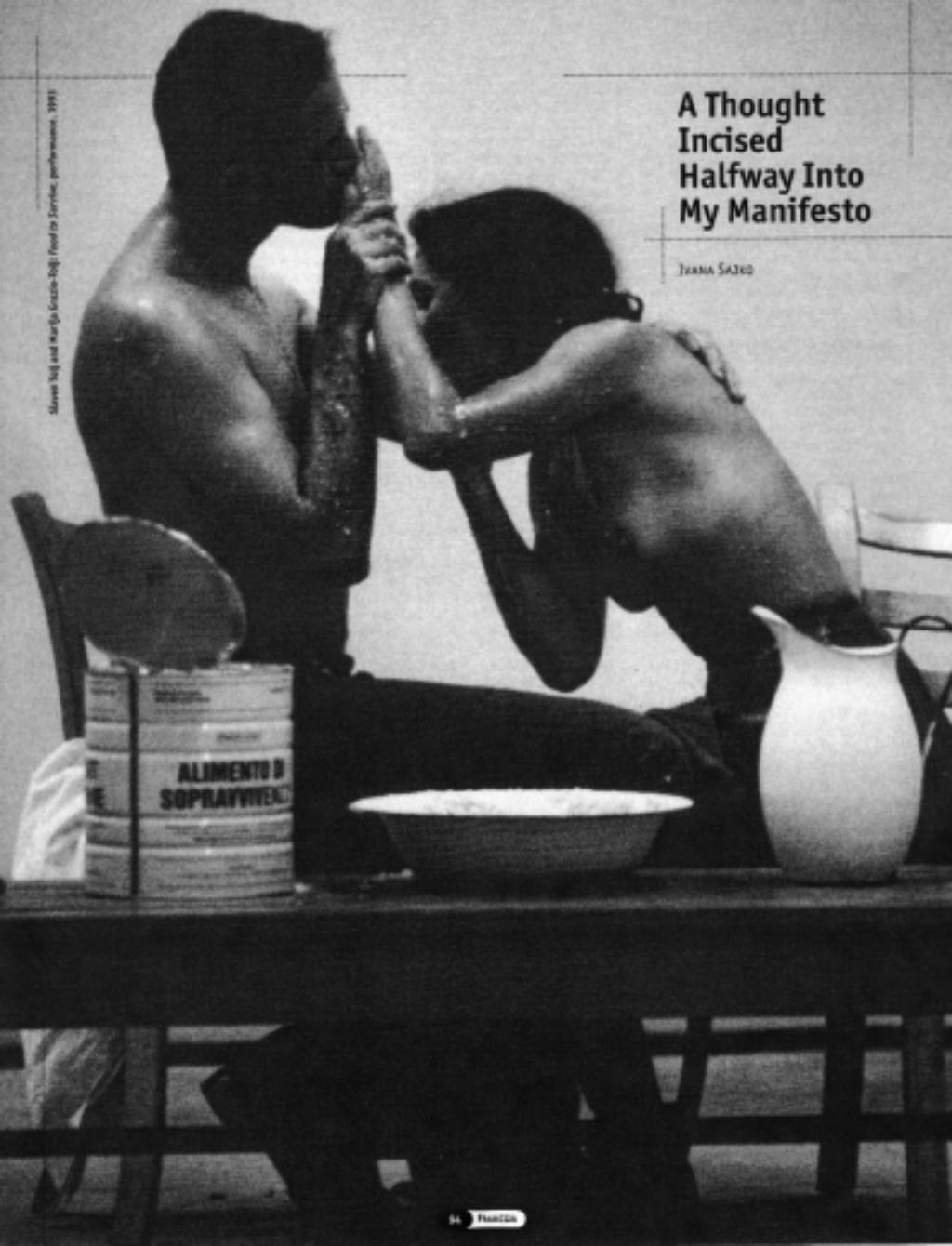
**G. Lovink:** This question really is too general to answer. We are now exchanging information via e-mail... These standards are the same everywhere. So are the programs. In Eastern Europe, these new media are mainly seen as business opportunities, for companies, to communicate with the rest of the world, not as vital tools to build up a critical, diverse and "open" civil society. But who knows... Perhaps this is gonna change one day, sooner or later, when the infrastructure will be better and more people will have access to these media. For the time being Eastern Europe looks rather like having "capitalism without capital". So it is doing it best, being more neo-liberal than anyone else, but again and again gets stuck into its own image as a "history belt."

**Q** West European countries and East European countries are redefining the terms in which they regard their relation to each other. How does the image of Eastern Europe the West European media are presenting to their home audiences figure both in the domestic and the global and vice versa? What are the contents of these terms; East European and West European?

**G. Lovink:** I am not gonna give you the traditional definitions of geopolitics. I suppose you do not want me to answer the question if Croatia is a natural partner of the Western EU/NATO block, or if it will remain a banana republic, ruled by private Svejkas, in the tradition of the Habsburg "central" Europe tradition. Or would you rather join to the Balkan class of 99? (That would be more my style). Let us not look too deep into the mediocre dreams of the ruling petty bourgeois. It stinks. Instead, I would say turn your historical obsession into an asset. I think that many West Europeans do not quite understand the self pity that comes after these waves of self destruction in the past ten years. This halfhearted competition for the greatest victim status. Being European is already bad enough. If you ask me, Europe die höfliche Besacke des Planeten Erde. Perhaps this would be a new border within Europe: those poor, heroic creatures, still believing in making history (the nation state, ethnicity), and those who have given up altogether and now profit from the benefits of living in a contained zone; where the historical passions have been transferred into cute, mild tourist attractions. It will take centuries of sophisticated entertainment to civilize the Euros and drive out those unlucky, unproductive ideas such as nation or ethnicity.

# A Thought Incised Halfway Into My Manifesto

TIRANA SAJEDO



Would I ever put my name to the world I live in?  
Never, for that world is like a heavy hand stifling my voice.  
Would I ever give up the world I live in?  
Never, for outside it, I would have nothing to say.  
I have discovered that red is not merely a historical iconography they are trying to bury, that it is not a flag with a star or it, the blood of the tasseer was, the wise tossed off in the honour of national idols; no, red is my private station and without it I would be left colourless. I would stay writing mad-fiction.  
I never day-dream, I am aware that the light of the West is only seen by moonwalkers of the East.  
So I only imagine... a departure...  
I am deflecting, crossing the border, one, two, three. I carry my strange accent with me. I carry with me the geographical dust on my soles, roots, a pocket dictionary, a visa, a town plan, as affidavat with a phone number! Hello?... Could we meet?... Where?... I will find the address myself... No, no one need pick me up...  
The expatriates club. A bad model of hospitality, a bad sense of identity. I refuse to go inside. Maybe I am being haughty, but I can't stand the rooms where a collective memory is being cultivated on the basis of folk groups, artificial national identity signs and two dozen great men in many frames. I am a part of history and I have witnessed a myriad shabby idols. I know the templates for forging merits that guarantee a framed square foot on the walls of patriot clubs. Is they really believe I could sit under those shrivelled names? Is of a may-saying discourse? Is of opposition implanted in my spinal marrow? We move to a different place. You need not worry about the hills, we will pay... Here, you'd better not smoke in the street... I apologise. Everyone smokes back home... No!  
Do not let nostalgia catch you in such a stupid situation, you have left nothing behind, the children are brought up to wage war anyway, through games in the park, the pedagogy of revenge... Pay no attention to scathed landscapes, do not look into bloodshot whites of the eyes... Still, everything I cannot forget beckons. I wear the graveyards of demolished tombstones like private decoration - a badge of courage. Perhaps it does not go well with my suit, but that is the aesthetic of the genitive and I confess: I am attracted to women with scars. I am attracted to interlocutors whose wisdom is tampered with suffering. I cherish the rings under my eyes like war trophies and sometimes catch myself in front of a mirror, narratologically combing the early grey hair my hair was dappled with during the intensifications of general danger. I am incurably regressive. I talk of history. They are pleased to see with what ease the contents of chronologies can be changed, the

possibility of interpreting the past confuses them. They are scared of a people who forgot in order to remember, all over again, and again, and again... All the deaths trodden into the pavements, all their dead buried under monumental ideologies. They say not a word. They eat. I try not to puff smoke into their plates: Are you not hungry?... It's a little late for lunch... Eat it as supper... I never have supper...

I confess so as to appease their manic wish to understand it all, to complete the information clauses leaped through in the papers and hope naively that national cooperability disappears with the distance. No relief, just a few hopeless diagnostic stock phrases adopted from medical discourse. I believe in no god who would have the ability to comprehend, I believe in no ideology capable of forgiving. I believe in no individual who would reconstruct the last identity of the people... He is the prefix of my thinking, no is a form of self-defence. There is some prophetic legacy in me, and every look into the future seems like something that has already happened, countless times. The waiter removes the plates and saucettes, clean the crumbs, leaves the table empty for cross examination. I gaze at the ashtray and stubbornly endorse the silence. I expect... They will pose the question now I will not know the answer to. The routine always the same: after the meal, while drinking wine, after all the theories concerning my genes, my past, my tribe with no future have been silently recounted. This being a thematic evening, I wait for it... What is the pacific's role in a war?... Which war?... Well, yours... Dara?

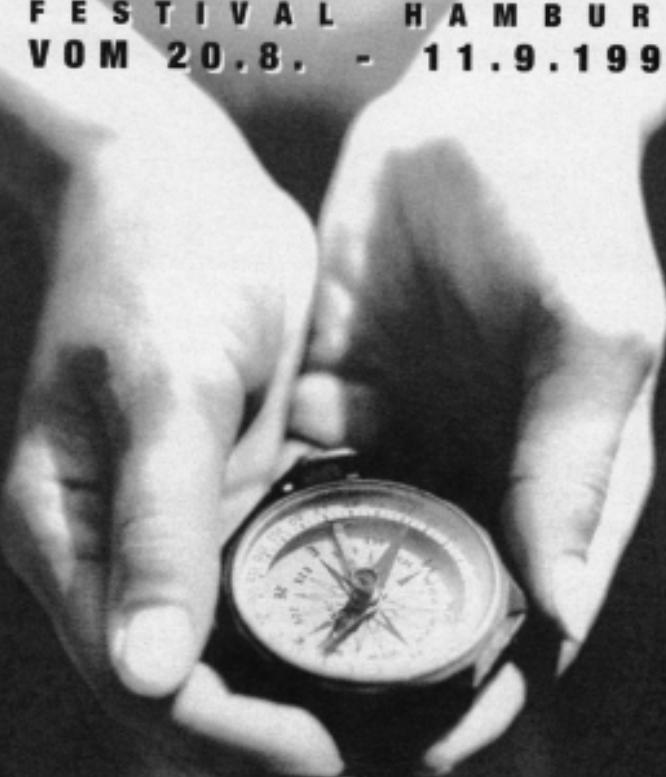
I always pause at this point, in the moment when I should slip into the mould of their expectations, earn their sympathy and a permanent residence permit. I don't know... I repeat... I don't know... To endure... Take part... Stay put... Come back... Write another version of history. Be here, among the epitaphs. Has another chance to make up for the hundred years of proverbial belatedness. For generations, I have been learning that the wounds do not heal but remain open. Malign remembrance is metastasizing in me. I am too old for therapy, too old to believe in the utopia of forgiving. I have been taught that pain is the only不可contestable proof, that red cannot be washed away, that it cannot fade but only turn dark red. Should I wake up in a morning of some other colour, I would feel deprived, lost in some unknown different world which has left me behind long ago, which expects me to catch up, but I cannot run. Nor do I want to. I have loads of trunks. Bulimia of soil.

Janusz Sajka is a member of the editorial board of *Przekrój*.

Translated from the Polish by Tomasz Brzak



16. INTERNATIONALES  
**SOMMERTHEATER**  
FESTIVAL HAMBURG  
VOM 20.8. - 11.9.1999



WO IST OSTEN ?





„Wer jenseits des neuen Eisernen Vorhangs nur Fremde, Mafia, Alkoholexzesse, Prostitution, heruntergekommene Psychiatrien und verlotterte Bahnhofskinder entdeckt, malt allenfalls die Bühnendekoration für eine große historische Seifenoper.“

Hans-Joachim Findelzen

## INTERNATIONALES SOMMERTHEATER FESTIVAL HAMBURG

The INTERNATIONALES SOMMERTHEATER FESTIVAL HAMBURG has staged its presentation of the international dance and theatre avant-garde every summer since 1984 for two to three weeks. Under the artistic direction of Dieter Jaenische and Gabriele Naumann, the festival has developed into the largest annual festival for the international performing arts in Germany.

The SOMMERTHEATER has gained this position by its distinctive artistic profile, which has made its reputation at home and abroad. The focal point of the INTERNATIONALES SOMMERTHEATER FESTIVAL HAMBURG is the presentation of the latest currents and pioneering productions of the international dance and theatre avant-garde - especially from cultures that are rather seldom presented in Europe: non-European and non-North-American artists. Its interest belongs to the theatrical experiment, to work that goes beyond the conventions of theatre aesthetics and the traditional boundaries between the arts. **1999** the festival is dedicated mainly to productions from Eastern Europe.



Ungarn/Frankreich

**Josef Nadj & Compagnie  
Les commentaires d'Abacuc**

20./21.8.99

Beginn: 20.00 Uhr

Dauer: 75 min. ohne Pause

Kampnagel, Halle K 6

Preise: DM 40,-/erm. 30,-

DM 30,-/erm. 20,-



Zur Festivaleröffnung entführt der ungarische Visionär und Bühnen-Magier Josef Nadj in sein ganz eigenes poetisches Labyrinth - eine überbordende Bilderwelt, die an Kafka und Borges zugleich erinnert.

„Die Kommentare des Habakuk“, des alttestamentarischen Propheten, der dem Land Israel Unglück verhieß, haben im Osten heute bedrückende Aktualität, bekommen. Aber es sind wie immer die kleinen Seelen, die alltäglich-menschlichen Unzulänglichkeiten und Absurditäten, mit denen sich Nadj auf sensible und zauberhafte Weise beschäftigt: verkrümme Buchhalterinzenzen in schäligem schwarzen Antigen entfalten ihr sinloses Tun. Sie stoßen ihre Köpfe unter den Tisch und führen abendrüber mit den Händen Männergespräche, sie tragen Gläser auf den krummen Rücken. Kein Bühnelement, das nicht den Standort wechselt und - innen holt - den Akzenten Platz bretst. Da sitzen und liegen sie, kreuz und quer, und auf dem Kopf, und welcher Ausgang sie auch immer wählen: sie landen doch auf der Bühne, wo sie - hochkomplexe Ithakaian folgend - die merkwürdigsten Dinge tun.

Der weltweit gefeierte Choreograph Josef Nadj wurde im Norden Jugoslawiens geboren, wuchs in Ungarn auf und begann dort seine Theaterkarriere, bevor er dem Rat seiner Lehrer folgte und nach Frankreich ging. Inzwischen ist er Leiter des Centre chorégraphique National d'Orléans. Die Kunst und die Vorstellungswelt seiner südosteuropäischen Heimat hat Nadj in seiner einzigartigen Bildersprache zum bestimmenden Thema gemacht.

**Koproduktion:** Centre Chorégraphique National d'Orléans, Theater der Stadt Remscheid, Hebbel-Theater Berlin

**Unterstützung:** Hamburgische Stiftung für Entwicklung, Kultur und Forschung Dr. Helmut und Hannelore Greve

The festival opens with the Hungarian visionary and stage magician Joseph Nadj's very own poetic labyrinth - a world of intense images, reminiscent of both Kafka and Borges.

Rumänien

**Fanfare Cioârlăia  
Konzert**

20./21.8.99

Beginn: 22.30/22.00 Uhr

Dauer: 90 min. ohne Pause

Kampnagel, Vorhalle 6

Preise: DM 25,-/erm. 15,-

Vergessen Sie alles, was Sie je über Blasmusik gehört haben. Die rumänische Zigeunerkapelle Fanfare Cioârlăia hat den Begriff „Blasmusik“ eine völlig neue Dimension gegeben und nach jeden Saal zum Kochen gebracht.

In geradezu wahnsinnigem Tempo blasen sich der Sopranklarinettist und Bandleiter Tean Iavancea und seine Männer an zwei Tubas, drei Trompeten, zwei Hörnern, zwei Altsaxophonen und einer weiteren Sopranklarinette die Lungen aus dem Leib. Eine große Trommel verstärkt das hoch-spannende Rhythmusgewicht. Zwischen orientalischen Klängen und jüdisch anmutenden Klarinetten-Sätzen, bitten immer wieder bekannte Zigeunerme洛oden auf, mutieren rhythmisch fast zum Techno, nur schneller. Platz 3 der World Music Charts und der deutsche Schallplattenpreis für die CD Radio Assoziiert zeugen von ihrem Erfolg, der nicht aufzuhalten ist.

Romanian gypsy orchestra Fanfare Cioârlăia has given a completely new meaning to the once brass music. In a frenetic tempo, these musicians blow their very souls out.





## INTERNATIONALES SOMMERTHEATER FESTIVAL HAMBURG

Georgien

### Rustavi Chor Konzert

22.8.

Beginn: 19.00

Dauer: 90 min., ohne Pause

Hauptkirche St. Katharinen

Preise: DM 25,-/erm. 20,-

Hörplätze: 15,-

### Deutsche Erstaufführung

**Der Rustavi Chor beginnt seit drei Jahrzehnten sein Publikum mit a capella Gesängen von seltener Schönheit und Virtuosität.**

Georgische Chöre - das ist ein im Westen fast gänzlich unbekanntes polyphones Erlebnis traditioneller Wechselseitigkeit von seltener Schönheit und Virtuosität. Kein geringerer als György Ligeti nannte sie als wichtigste Inspiration für seinen eigenen musikalischen Weg. Der Rustavi Chor ist ihr bester Vertreter.

Sie kommen aus einer Weltregion, in die es nur wenige von uns einmal verschlagen hat - Georgien - nahe dem Kaukasus - an der Brücke europäischer und asiatischer Kulturen - von Islam und Christentum in gleicher Weise beeinflusst. Nur von einer Salzairi-Fichte begleitet, lobt der Rustavi Chor diese Facetten traditioneller georgianischer Musik aus, verleiht mühelos und virtuos komplizierte Gesangstechniken, präsentiert wundervoll und wundervoll urig und zugleich lebendige und mittellose Gesänge. Für seine außergewöhnlichen musikalischen Leistungen erhielt der Rustavi Chor 1983 den Albert Schweitzer Preis.

**The Rustavi Chor explores every facet of Georgian music to the mere accompaniment of a Salmon flute. The artisitcally effortlessly and expertly combining complicated singing techniques and presenting ancient yet vivacious and captivating songs in a sensitive and wonderful way.**



Tschechische Republik

### Ivo Blittová Konzert

3. - 4.9.

Beginn: 20.30 Uhr

Dauer: 80 min., ohne Pause

Kempnagel Halle K 2

Preise: DM 25,-/erm. 25,-



**Mitreißend und energiegeladen. Überzeugend und sympathisch perfekt sind die tschechische Multi-Künstlerin Ivo Blittová in ihrer Heran der Zuschauer.**

Die Vokalistin und Geigenvirtuose sprangt in ihren Solauftritten über alle Grenzen hinweg. Ihre musikalischen Performances sind eine Kombination aus Elementen traditioneller osteuropäischer Musik und Jazz, einfachen Volkstümern und freier Improvisation. Expressives Geigenpiel, dessen Wurzeln unverkennbar in den Traditionen osteuropäischer Zigeunermusik liegen, und eindrucksvolle vokale Klangeperimente sind von Einflüssen des tschechischen experimentellen Theaters geprägt. Mit spielerischem Charme kontaktiert sie musikalische Elemente und sprachlichen Wit. Neben ihren Soloabenden hat Ivo Blittová u. a. mit David Mass, Pavel Foltý, Chris Cutler und Fred Frith zusammengearbeitet.

**The Czech vocal artist uses violence violence Ivo Blittová brilliantly combines elements of traditional folk European music, jazz, simple folk songs and free improvisation to assemble a musical melting of musical and scenic performance.**

Ungarn

### Moving House Theatre Company Beckett-songs

26./27.8.

Beginn: 20.00 Uhr

Dauer: 80 min., ohne Pause

Hamburger Kammerspiele

Preise: DM 25,-/erm. 15,-

„Ungarisch ist eine schöne Sprache. Wenn man es flüstert, zieht es gehemmt aus. Wenn man es singt, schlüpfen die vielen „i“ in den langen Wörtern ins Ohr. Und wenn man es schnell, werden die „i“ ganz spitz und das gerollte „r“ wird gefährlich. Moving House zeigen wieviel Theater man spielen kann, obwohl eigentlich „es“ über Musik improvisiert wird.“ Eike Behre

Beckett als Sound: Texte aus dem „Endspiel“ in kleine Gedichte destilliert und andere Variationen über das Absurde bilden die Vorlage für die „Beckett-songs“.

„Das sind die Mythen des 20. Jahrhunderts“, sagt László Hudi, Regisseur und Gründer von Magda Ház (auf Englisch Moving House Theatre). Weil aber Mythen schwer zu erkennen sind, läßt er sie singen, kreischen, stottern, murksen, rütteln. Die 14 Akteure von Magda Ház zünden ein musikalisch-theatralisches Feuerwerk, einen Sound- und Wortschatz, einen urzeitlichen, hochengenwärtigen und rau gehörten Musik- und Darstellungsschatz. Sie beschreiben durch duktatormischen Sprech-gesang, modernen Pop und Latin Jazz, experimentieren wild mit sakralen Sound, ungewöhnliche Melodien und orientalischen Klängen über die starke, dardanische Lyrik der Texte. Becketts Welt der irischen Penner wird nach Ungarn verlegt, verdoppelt so die Absurdität und verschafft ihr zugleich eine chaotische Heiligkeit, wie sie selten am Theater zu sehen und zu hören ist.

László Hudi war als Tänzer Mitbegründer von Josef Kudrász Theatres Ziel. Für „Beckett-songs“ hat er zahlreiche internationale Preise erhalten.

**Unterstützung: Soros Foundation Budapest, City Council of Budapest, National Cultural Fund Hungary, RU Théâtre Budapest, Hamburger Stiftung für Entwicklung, Kultur und Forschung Dr. Helmut und Hannelore Greve**

*Auts based on Beckett's Endgame distilled into little songs, variations on the absurd by Magda Ház, directed by László Hudi. Never before has Beckett been interpreted so suggestively and unconventionally.*





Tschechische Republik

**Déjá Donné Production  
Aria Spinta**

21./22.8.

Beginn: 20.30 Uhr

Dauer: 70 min., ohne Pause

Kampnagel, Halle K 2

Preise: DM 25,-/erm. 15,-

Deutsche Erstaufführung - Koproduktion

„Ein kleiner Luftstrom kann sich manchmal in etwas völlig unerwartetes wie ein Hurrikan, ein Sturm oder eine schmerzvolle Stille verwandeln“

Simone Sandroni

Die Tschechin Lenka Flory und der Italiener Simone Sandroni interpretieren „die großen slawischen Themen“ in ihrer neuen Choreographie „Aria Spinta“ auf unerwartete und feuerzehrende Art völlig neu: Wünsche und Enttäuschungen, Versuche und Ausflüchte, Triumfe und Schicksal setzen sie um in Tanztheater voller Originalität. Mit ihrer Compagnie Déjà Donné sind die beiden Choreographen heute eine der größten Hoffnungen des zeitgenössischen Tanzes in der Tschechischen Republik. Für ihr neues Stück „Aria Spinta“ haben sie Tänzer aus Bulgarien, Kroatien, der Tschechischen Republik, Italien, Deutschland und den USA gewonnen. Ihre kulturellen Wurzeln und ihre Erfahrungen im Osten Europas prägen das Stück. Lenka Flory und Simone Sandroni tanzen jahrelang bei Wim Vandekeybus.

**Koproduktion:** Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg, La Flûteuse Mulhouse, de Stagel Antwerpen, Hebbel-Theater Berlin,  
**Unterstützung:** City of Cagliari/Städte, Open Society fund Prag, City of Prague, Festival Sipario Ducale

Lenka Flory and Simone Sandroni, formerly Wim Vandekeybus' dancers, represent a young dynamic dance theatre from the Czech Republic with their new production, Aria Spinta.



Russland

**Sasha Pepelyayev's Kinetic Theatre  
One Second Hand**

25./26.8.

Beginn: 20.30 Uhr

Dauer: 75 min., ohne Pause

Kampnagel, Halle K 1

Preise: DM 25,-/erm. 15,-

Unaufführung - Koproduktion



Mit seinen exzellenten, ballett-trainierten Tänzern bewegt sich Sasha Pepelyayev riskobereit zwischen zeitgenössischen und traditionellen Tanzelementen, zwischen Theater, Akrobatik, Sprache und Bewegung, ständig auf der Suche nach neuen Herausforderungen und theatralisch-tänzerischen Erzähltechniken.

In seinem neuen Stück stellt sich Pepelyayev wie in den letzten Arbeiten den Tragödien der zerbrechenden russischen Gesellschaft: Aggression, Langeweile, Zerfall. „One Second Hand“ ist seine erste internationale Koproduktion, seine Compagnie ist beim Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg in Residenz. Sasha Pepelyayev hat mit seinem Kinetic Theatre als erster Chorograph aus dem gesamten Gebiet der ehemaligen Sowjetunion den begehrten Bagnolet-Preis gewonnen.

**Koproduktion:** Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg, Airbus Festival, Dansescenen Copenhagen,  
**Unterstützung:** Prix d'Auteur du Conseil Général de la Seine-Saint-Denis (Residenties Chorégraphiques Internationales 1998)

Sasha Pepelyayev and his excellent team of classically trained dancers move between contemporary and traditional elements of dance, between theatre, acrobatics, language and movement; always willing to take risks in their search for new challenges and new theatre/dance narrative techniques.



Estland

**Peeter Jalakas/Von Krohl Teater  
Estonian Games. Wedding**

27./28.8.

Beginn: 20.30 Uhr

Dauer: 70 min., ohne Pause

Kampsiegel Halle K 2

Preise: DM 30,-/erm. 20,-

„Estonian Games. Wedding“ ist eine musikalische Multimedia-Meditation, die Theater, Video, Computer-Animationen, Folklorethese und Hochzeitsrituale zu einem einzigartigen Spektakel vereint.

Krieg oder Frieden? Was sind die Mechanismen der Geschichte? Die Projektion eines riesigen Bildschirms ist im Bühnenhintergrund zu sehen. Ein Computerspiel läuft darauf - die Geschichte Estlands. In Sechs-Sekunden-Rhythmen tauschen die Jahre ab 1500 vorbei. Auf der Bühne wird die Geschichte Estlands von einer völlig absurden Konstellation überlagert: zwischen Schauspiel, Folklorentänzen und Computeranimation findet ein Hochzeitsritual statt. Peeter Jalakas ungewöhnliches Theaterstück wurde schon 2006 uraufgeführt, seitdem ins La Mama Theater New York und ins Watermans Art Centre nach London eingeladen. Jetzt stellt sich der ambitionierte Theatremacher Jalakas mit einer Neuauflage von „Estonian Games“ in Berlin, Hamburg und Amsterdam erstmals wieder dem internationalen Publikum.

In estnischsprachiger und englischer Sprache.

Produktion: Estonian Stage Productions (ESP)

Unterstützung: Estädtisches Ministerium für Kultur, Theater der Welt Berlin, Felix Meritis Foundation Amsterdam

Estonian Games. Wedding is a musical multi-media meditation that merges theatre, video, computer generated animation, traditional folk dances and wedding rituals into a unique spectacle.





Rußland

**Moscow Theatre  
of Young Spectators  
Das Gewitter**

3./4.9.  
Beginn: 19.30 Uhr  
Dauer: 3 h mit Pause  
Deutsches Schauspielhaus  
Preise: DM 37,-/erm. 22,-

Deutsche Erstaufführung

Im Bauch des Theaters und entlang seiner Nervenstangen, hoch über dem Publikum, zwischen Beleuchtungstechnik und Schnürböden findet „Das Gewitter“ statt, eines der stärksten Stücke des neueren russischen Theaters.

Die Moskauer Regisseurin Henrietta Yanovskaya nutzt die klassischen Stärken des russischen Theaters: großartige Schauspieler, ein wunderbares, leitende Figuren und Konstellationen voller Emotionalität und lässt sie in einer ganz unklassischen Theateratmosphäre auf. Die Regisseurin und ihr Bühnendesigner Sergei Barkhin haben eine unkonventionelle Lösung für ein Stück gefunden, in dem es um die provokativen Konventionen im Russland des 19. Jahrhunderts geht, um Trikame und Utopien, die mit der Brutalität der Gegenwart konfrontieren. Henrietta Yanovskaya ironisiert diesen verharmerten Klassiker Österreichs in eigenwilligen Collagen. Nach großen Erfolgen in Avignon und Stockholm wird „Das Gewitter“ als deutsche Erstaufführung in Hamburg vorge stellt.

In russischer Sprache mit deutscher Simultansetzung.

The Storm is one of the most powerful plays of the new Russian theatre. Moscow director Henrietta Yanovskaya uses the renowned resources of the Russian theatre: excellent actors, a marvellous text, emotionally charged characters and constellations.





Bulgarien

**Sfumato  
Apokryph**

31.8. und 1.9.

Beginn: 20.30 Uhr

Dauer: 80 min., ohne Pause

Kampnagel Halle K 2

Preise: DM 30.-/erm. 20,-

„Sfumato“ wurde die von Leonardo da Vinci entwickelte Maltechnik genannt, die Luft, den „leeren Raum“ darzustellen, um das „Umweltbare sichtbar“ zu machen. Peter Brook nannte sein grundlegendes Theaterwerk „Der leere Raum“, Margarita Madenova und Ivan Dobtchev nennen ihr Theaterlaboratorium „Sfumato“.

„Apokryph“ bezieht sich auf Texte frühmittelalterlicher Künstler in Bulgarien. Als verberne Schriftsteller hatten die ursprünglich mündlich überlieferten und wegen ihrer literarischen Inhalte erst später zu Papier gebrachten Apokryphen revolutionäre Sprengkraft. Die moderne Adaption der Texte und ihre Inszenierung durch Sfumato lässt sich in gewohnter Begriffen von Ironie, Tragödie und Darstellungskunst kaum vermitteln. Die Inszenierung setzt ihre Zyklen nicht nur auf der sprachlichen Ebene, sondern vor allem mit einer sehr lebendigen und fast blinderischen Spielweise. Mythos und Faszination der Texte und der bulgarischen Kultur werden mit einem sicherem Instinkt für Theater zelebriert, dem man sich als Zuschauer kaum entziehen kann.

Margarita Madenova und Ivan Dobtchev haben 1988 das Theaterlabor Sfumato gegründet. Seitdem haben sie Sfumato durch ihre Inszenierungen, ihre songähnlichen Recherchen und die gemeinsame künstlerische Leitung geprägt und zu einer der interessantesten Theaterwerkstätten Osteuropas gemacht.

In bulgarischer Sprache mit deutscher Untertitelung.

**Unterstützung:** Bulgarisches Ministerium für Kultur

*Apocrypha is a piece based on the early medieval pagan writings and staged by an ensemble of performers exuberant of adventure. Its realm of events and emotional impact induce of a prince-like state.*





Bulgarien

**Lilia Abdjieva Company  
Hamlet**

8.9. - 30.9.  
Beginn: 20.30 Uhr  
Dauer: 80 min., ohne Pause  
Kampnagel, Halle K 2  
Preise: DM 30,-/erm. 20,-

**Deutsche Erstaufführung**

„Das, was Lilia ist, provoziert und De wünscht Dir, daß es kein Ende nimmt.“

Marieta Djurova

Grell und schrill, respektlos und witzig kommt ihre Hamlet-Version daher - aber eigentlich ist das gar kein Hamlet - eher ein fragmentarischer Hamlet-Kommentar - in 80 fulminanten Theatervorlagen von einem ausschließlich männlichen Ensemble rassend und rasant heruntergespielt, seiert, persifliert und ironisiert. Shakespeare als Autorentheater - das ist Lilia Abdjievas Spezialität. Die junge bulgarische Regisseurin liest es, klassiker zu entrümpeln: Shakespeare, Goethe, Molière, Gogol. Sie nutzt und benutzt Klassiker, um für ihre eigene Generation zu sprechen. Zwischen Ironie und Kreativität entsteht dabei erstaunliche theatralische Kommentare einer überaus talentierten Theaterschauspielerin.

In bulgarischer Sprache mit deutscher Untertitelung.

Glamorous and gaudy, entirely disrespectful and witty, Lilia Abdjieva's version of Hamlet - 80 apocalyptic theatre minutes, with the all male cast furiously performing in a dissecting, bantering and ironic manner - is really more of a fragmentary commentary on the play than the staging of it.





Slowenien

En-Knap  
**Far From Sleeping Dogs**

7.9.  
Beginn: 20.30 Uhr  
Dauer: 60 min., ohne Pause  
Komponist: Halle K 1  
Preise: DM 25,-/erm. 15,-

Iztok Kovačs Arbeiten faszinieren stets durch kühle Präzision, eine eigenwillige Intellektuelle Nachdenklichkeit und Melancholie.

Auf dem Video-Screen wechseln Aufnahmen der musikalisch-szenischen Improvisationen und experimentelle Exesse eines begnadeten Musikers und Komponisten mit Bildern von vergangenen kommunistischen Massenveranstaltungen und verkärteten Bildern von Industriearbeitern. Auf der kargen Bühne kommandieren fünf Tänzerinnen das Filmmaterial. Kovačs jüngste Produktion ist eine Kunstperformance, in der Musik, die gefilmte musikalische Interpretation von Vinko Globokar und das Filmmaterial aus slowenischen Archiven eine Gesamtkonzeption bilden. Iztok Kovač zeichnet eine Art letzten Blick zurück - bis die Jalousien vor den Bildern der Vergangenheit verschließen und die Gesichter neu verteilt werden.

**Reproduktion:** Künstlerhaus Mousonturm Frankfurt, Hebel-Theater Berlin, Saene Salzburg, in Zusammenarbeit mit I.K. Slowenien

**Unterstützung:** Kulturreferat Slowenien und Stadt Ljubljana

Iztok Kovač's latest production is an art performance in which music, filmed sequences of Vinko Globokar's musical interpretation, and material from Slovenian archives are built into a total concept.





Deutschland

**Sasha Waltz & Guests  
Na Zemlje**Deutsch-Russische Kooperation  
10./11.9.99

Beginn: 20.00 Uhr

Dauer: 105 min. ohne Pause

Kampriegel Halle K 6

Preis: DM 40,-/erm. 30,-

DM 30,-/erm. 20,-

Koproduktion

Es reicht nach frischer Erde, Heu und altem Laub. Die russischen und deutschen Tänzer von Sasha Waltz zelebrieren einen Abgang auf alle denkbaren Tschechow'schen Landpartien: real, drückig, grausam und anhnend.

Sasha Waltz inszeniert in „Na Zemlje“ (auf Erde) mit sechs russischen Tänzern von Gennadij Abramovs Klasse für Expressive Bewegung an der Schule der Dramatischen Kunst in Moskau und sechs Tänzern der eigenen Compagnie ihre Erfahrungen auf dem russischen Land. Das sind wütend aussichtslose Kämpfe wie ein paar Momente der Aufmerksamkeit, um überflügig erhöhte Positionen innerhalb einer zerstörten Welt - Aussichten auf die Auflösung. Aber da ist auch eine Kraft zum Überleben, ein Bedürfnis nach Zärtlichkeit und Kontakt und eine energiegeladene Kreativität, die die Schlauenschlachten in dieser erschreckend naturalistischen Ode dominieren. In epischen Bildern, die man nicht leicht vergibt, schafft die deutsch-russische Compagnie extreme, reale und summe Szenen einer schwierigen Begegnung.

Sasha Waltz, die ab Herbst 99 gemeinsam mit Ostermeier u.a. die Leitung der Schaubühne Berlin übernimmt, stellt ihre vorläufig letzte Produktion als freie Choreographin vor, die sie 1998 in Rußland erarbeitet hat.

Ein großer Teil der Proben fand auf theaterhistorischen Terrain statt: auf dem ehemaligen Gut von K.S. Stanislavskij in der Nähe von Moskau.

**Produktion:** Sasha Waltz & Guests in Zusammenarbeit mit der Schule der Dramatischen Kunst, Moskau und den Sophiesälen Berlin.

**Koproduktion:** Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg, Aarhus Festival, Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus, Goethe-Institut Moskau und München, Festival Welt in Basel.

**Unterstützung:** Kulturkomitee der Regierung der Stadt Moskau, Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur Berlin, Stanislavskij Charity Foundation

The festival closes with Sasha Waltz' Russian and German dancers celebrating in "Na Zemlje" (On the Soil) something like a symbolic end to all conceivable Chekhov's country life excursions: real, squat, gruesome and poignant.





## INTERNATIONALES SOMMERTHEATER FESTIVAL HAMBURG

### Programmübersicht Internationales Sommertheater Festival Hamburg '99

Jahrest. 29, 22383 Hamburg, Tel. +49-40-271151

Name der Compagnie	Land	Titel	Regisseur/Choreograph	Auftrittsdauer	Beginn	Ort
Josef Nadj & Company	H/T	Les commentaires d'Abacuc	Josef Nadj	20./21.8.	20.00 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 6
EastWest Discorla	ROM	Russetz 21.8. anschl. Party		20./21.8.	23.30/23.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Nomade 6
Deja Vu Prod.	DE	Aria Sprinta	Lenka Pory Sissone Sandrine	21./22.8.	20.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 2
Rui Horta stage works	B	Zeltzaum	Rui Horta	24./25.8.	20.00 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 6
Sasha Pepelyan's Kinetic Theatre	RUS	One second hand!	Sasha Pepelyan	25./26.8.	20.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 1
Rustam Cher	GDR	Konzert		22.8.	20.00 Uhr	Kaupkirche 9, Kulturkreis
Babylon	D	Born Bad	Barbara Neururer	21.-25.8. Isaufführung am 24.8.	20.00 Uhr	Amerika-Haus
Mining House Theatre Company	H	Bestfefts-songs	Udo Höffl	26./27.8.	20.00 Uhr	Hamburger Kammer spiele
Peter Jakobs /Non Kraft Theater	CST	Extreme Games, Wedding	Peter Jakobs	27./28.8.	20.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 2
La La La Human Steps	CAN	Sail	Edouard Lock	21./28.8.	20.00 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 6
Shumate	BG	Apokryph	Ivan Bödöken Margareta Häderer	31.8./1.9.	20.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 2
DVB Physical Theatre	GB	The Happiest Day of My Life	Lloyd Newson	2.- 4.9.	20.00 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 6
Iva Iltzai	CZ	Klausent [Vokalensemble]		3./4.9.	20.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 2
Mexico Theatre of Young Spectators	RUS	Den Gewitter	Henrikhe Yannochkaya	3./4.9.	20.30 Uhr	Beobacht-Schauplatz
En-Knap	SLD	Far From Sleeping Dogs	Årck Rovsl	3.9.	20.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 2
Lilja Kibadze Company Angela Gamaria Productions	RU	Hamlet	Lilja Kibadze Angela Gamaria	8.-10.9. 9./10.9.	20.30 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 2 Kampnagel Halle K 1
Sasha Weltz & Guests	D	Na Sonje 11.8. anschl. Abschlussparty	Sasha Weltz	10./11.8.	20.00 Uhr	Kampnagel Halle K 6

Deutsche Erstaufführungen DVB Physical Theatre, Mexican Theatre of Young Spectators, Deja Vu Prod., Lilja Kibadze, Rustam Cher

Uraufführungen: Sasha Pepelyan's Kinetic Theatre, Babylon

### kOntraST-Programme des Internationalen Sommertheater Festivals Hamburg '99

Vortrag	Ondrej Habl	22.8.	„Bitter Rain xii) the borders gone“	19.00 Uhr	Kampnageloyer
Vortrag	Garret Stafanovski	23.8.	„Tales from the Wild East“	19.00 Uhr	Kampnageloyer
Vortrag	György Szabó	27.8.	„Let's get it on!“	18.30 Uhr	Hamburger Kammerspiele
Vortrag	Ruth Wynsken-Gallien	3.9.	„Rufland - eine Herausforderung für uns“	18.30 Uhr	Deutsches Schauspielhaus
Vortrag	Nela Herding	7.8.	„Berichtsvorlesung/Reaktion gelesen“	18.00 Uhr	Kampnageloyer
Vortrag	Zygmunt Bauman	8.9.	„Europe in the globalizing world“	19.00 Uhr	Kampnageloyer
Lesung	Hans-Wolmar Hindersen	18.9.	Werkstatt-Lesung „Verlorene Welten“	22.00 Uhr	Kampnageloyer
Vortrag	Dragan Kralj	19.9.	„A halting transition: to what?“	18.30 Uhr	Kampnageloyer

Neben den Vorträgen gibt es Publikums Gespräche zu einzelnen Aufführungsaufführungen:

Podiumsdiskussion	„No[n] steht Odeonspu“	18.8.	mit: Zygmunt Bauman, Dragan Kralj, Hans-Wolmar Hindersen, Vladimir Radovici, Peter Schirm, Ulrich Siebold	18.00 Uhr	Kampnageloyer
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Die Proferatstafel und der Vortrag von Zygmunt Bauman finden in Kooperation mit dem Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung statt.

Workshop	Out-About Laboratorium	29.8.-0.9.	„A open process,	14.00-18.30 Uhr	Kampnagel
Special	Dirty Balkan	ab 25.8. jeweils Mi-Fr (außer 4. und 11.9.)			Kampnagel
Special	Das Balkan-Bankett ressisches Festmahl	4.9.		22.30 Uhr	Kampnageloyer
Party	Das Fest	21.8.		22.30 Uhr	Kampnagel-Vorhalle 6

Der Eintritt zu allen Veranstaltungen des kOntraST-Programms ist frei mit Ausnahme des Balkan-Banketts.

**Box Office: Tickets are available from 21.7. at tel. +49-40-270 949 49 or tel. +49-40-300 51-370.**



# TI ÅR EFTER MURENS FALD

27. AUGUST - 5. SEPTEMBER 1999





## SILENCE OF THE BALKANS

**GORAN BREGOVIĆ, BALKAN**

Musikhuset Aarhus, Store Sal

Lørdag 28. aug. kl. 14.30 og 19.30

Pris kr. 300, 250, 200. Unge under 25 år kr. 240,

190, 140

Art. Århus Festuge

Hører Balkans helt store sangerinde stilskæde inden for rock og pop, der står i spidsen af en rytmegruppe, et symfoniorkesteret, et mandakor, tre sopraner og en dansk sangertinde, makedonske trompetere og så det læse, når der skrives op for en multimediedeforestillning med danserne, engle i trapéz og en videofortælling på storkanren, som medhavende og mættet af historiske og aktuelle associationer anbringer os tilbage midt i den balkanske kæss.

Avisen *Diario del Alto Aragón* skrev: "En fascinierende sammentræffning af vigtig forskellige musikgenerer. Klassisk

musik, rock, elektronisk avantgarde samt de afdæmpede, bulgarske slagsmætters overvældende vitalitet. En form for musik, hvor følelsen af fri og død, epik og lynk, gråd og letter smelter sammen og bliver til en dyrrende oplevelse af den evige skjæfrene tilstand, det balkanske folk synes at leve under".

Goran Bregović er manden, der bærer lys i tajene hos et meget stort og sammeartet publikum. Dåb i kum på Balkan, men i hele Middelhavsområdet og efterhundet så højt mod nord som Stockholm, hvor han hedder en busind-

taltig skare på Segelets Terr en varm aften under byens status som kulturbystads årt.

Bregović er højrefremmest kendt for sin filmmusik til så forskellige film som Cannes-vindende "Underground" af landsmanden Karancic, og "Akzona Dream", hvor hans musik fremføres af Iggy Pop. Bregović - der i flere år har boet i Paris - leverer i Festugen live sit musikaliske indslag for fred på Balkan. "Silence of the Balkans" er en musikalisk kalifikation for fred!



It is the highly acclaimed pop-rock artist, Goran Bregović, who is the lead of a rythme group, a symphonic orchestra, a men's choir, three sopranos, a Bosnian singer, Macedonian trumpeters, etc. in this multimedia performance with dancers, trapeze artists and a fantastic video-filmed story. Historic as well as present-day associations

bring us right into the centre of the Balkan issues. Goran Bregović's audience may be found not just in the Balkans, but all over the Mediterranean area and as far north as Stockholm. "Silence of the Balkans" may be seen a musical advertisement for peace!

## MANDEN DER ØNSKEDE SIG EN HAVUDSIGT

**STEFFEN BRANDT OG TV-2, PETER SCHAFUSS BALLETEN,  
RADIOUNDERHOLDNINGSØRKESTRET**

Musikkens Aarhus, Store Sali

Torsdag 2., og fredag 3. sept. kl. 19.30, Lørdag 4. sept. kl. 14 og 19  
1 t. 30 min.

Pris kr. 325,- 275,- 225,- Unge under 25 år kr. 265,- 215,- 165  
Arr. Århus Festuge

"Jeg så i avisen at historien er slut/ alle tanker er tænkt,  
osse dem der er forbudt/ den vestlige verden har sejret  
sig ihjel/ på ideen om at alle skal klare sig selv/ Selv rus-  
sene er gået ned med flaget/ lige der hvor Stalin ligger  
begravet/ det er et spørgsmål om tid, ja det er lige før/  
den tredje verden står og banker på din dør/ Det er for  
sent nu at tage maskerne og hovedet/ det er dårlig  
timing at miste modet/ det er slet ikke tid til at opfinde  
lagne/ det er tid til at tro sine egne øjne/ Ræk mig sal-  
tet/ åbn såret/ smart brænder broerne på himlen/ og vi  
blir et med stjernemrimlen. . .



Det er Århus Festuges største kultur-  
riske sæsonlig nogenlunde, som går  
over Musikkens store scene med den  
umiddelbart lidt uærlige titel.  
Udgangspunktet er dog sårligt simpelt:  
"Man tager et seriøst arbejdende og  
velrenommeret rockband, en håndfuld  
gode sange, et stort symfonisk orke-

ster, Danmarks pt. mest sacrefriige  
ballettkampagni samt et ønske om at  
bevæge, gribe og mulige flytte noget  
stilenkrevende ikrustet luft.

Om der er tale om et festlæg, en udvik-  
ling og en stærre sammenheng kunne  
være det spørgsmål, publikum stillede  
sig selv på vej ud, medførerende en  
klar farsemmelse af, at det er der jo  
noget.

Ordet er Steffen Brandts, Universet,  
er hans sang fra de seneste få år.  
Kommentare og refleksioner over  
livets gang set gennem et meget dans-  
tigt temperament og sprog, men i en ver-  
den, der ikke kan undgå at slå liges-  
nen. Udtog af "Historien er slut",  
skrevet 1988, profeterer nærmest den  
situation, vi står midt i lige nu, som  
indevorende tilskuer.

Dette arrivers arrangeres for fuldt sym-  
fonisk uftale af arrangementet 61  
"Shakespeare in Love", Nick Ingman,  
der selv dirigerer Radiounder-  
holdningsørkestret. Lad Peter  
Schafuus - med baggrund i Blaas, har  
ballet om Blaas' kærestegørelse under  
strømmene i musikken. Og lad så per-

likum se en dybde og sammenhang i  
et fareblikende og skærpformuleret  
rock-værk. Så ventet der publikum en  
anderledes oplevelse!

"The Man Who Wanted a View of the  
Globe" is the somewhat bizarre title of  
the most ambitious performance ever  
put on by the Aarhus Festival. The recipe  
is that of Steffen Brandt. The universe is  
his songs from the past ten years.  
Reflections on life as seen through a  
very Danish temperament and  
language. Niels Dyrberg con-  
ducts the orchestra and  
Peter Schafuus is respon-  
sible for the choreography.





Frank Castorf

## TERRORDROM

**VOLKSBUHNE, TYSKLAND**

Musikhuset Aarhus, Store Sal.

Mandag 30. aug. kl. 19.30

Pris kr. 225, 180 og 100. Unge under 25 år kr. 165, 120 og 100

Opføres på tysk med danske overtekster

Arr. Århus Festuge

## OM KOMMERCIALISERINGENS HÆSLIGE, MEN OGSÅ GRINAGTIGE FJÆS

**Instruktøren om Terrordrom:**  
**"For mig er Terrordrom en**  
**Berliner hjemstavnsmorom,**  
**der udspiller sig i en ny**  
**tid"**



Volksbühne har i årene efter Murens fald indtaget en rolle, som i en vis forstand kan sammenlignes med Dr. Danes i København. Teatret er blevet den unges sted, hvor de unge fra det gamle Berlin-fælles, der er altid fyldt med cykler foran det imponante, men også frigjordsgyldende teater på Rosa-Luxembourg-Platz, der er en af totalitær arkitektur, men som indendørs byder på nogle af de mest spændende systemkritiske forestillinger overhovedet i Europa lige nu.

"Terrordrom" er baseret på en lige ukonkret roman af den unge forfatter, Tim Staffel. Børnejældens og Instructionenes stårt teatrets leder, tysk teaters enfant terrible, Frank Castorf, før. Det er blevet et kæmptigt spøg om

Berlin lige nu. Om konnerdaliseringshædre, men også grinagtige fjæs. Om fællesskabskampningen. Om hæv som et enigt-to-show. Om en ubartlig overflade, der gennembrudtes af voldelige længslør og seksuelle trængsler. Om afskeden med "Wunderland".

Det er et bernerhelstenværtigt, apokalyptisk storbyscenarium, der rulles frem for øjene af os af personerne, der spilles formidabelt - ekspresionistisk og akrobatiske urkomisk - af et held forrygende skuespilere.

Det er vanvittigt sjælt og skremmende uhøjtægts. Berlin har ændret sig siden Murens fald, men hvordan?

Holstbühne in Berlin is the epitome of totalitarian architecture, so imposing and awe-inspiring theatre - its sharp content in the performances itself, ranking among the most exciting violent performances in Europe.

One of these is: "Terrordrom", a crazy play about Berlin right now. A story about the history but also hilarious face of commercialization. About a surface penetrated by violent yearnings and sexual interests. About the farewell to "Wunderland". A joyful and frighteningly funny performance with a gallery of characters played by a team of formidable actors.





Sasha Waltz

"Trætende, fascinérende,  
ofte hæravende smuk, til tider  
eged grusom"

Frankfurter Rundschau

"Med *Na Zemle* har Waltz bevist,  
at succesen ikke er steget hørende  
til hovedet.

Han har brenne solist plantet på  
scenegubet, "på jorden" fristes  
man til at sige"

Frankfurter Rundschau

"Han har brenne solist plantet på  
scenegubet, "på jorden" fristes  
man til at sige"

## NA ZEMLE

**SASHA WALTZ & GUESTS, TYSKLAND-RUSLAND**

Ridderhuset, Vester Allé

Torsdag 26. og fredag 27. aug. kl. 19.30. Et. 30 min.

Pris kr. 175. Unge under 25 år kr. 115

Art. Århus Festuge

ARHUS FESTUGE

# На Земле

(på jorden)

Smudsig-brun og lideligtstende snor den sig hen over scenegulvet – den flad, Anton Tjekov handrede år tidligere skildrende i sit beretningskunst "Kirsebærhaven" som et paradijsk udflytningsmål, besøgt af damer med pastelfarvede silkesjaler og herrer drukkende koldt læskedrikke. I kontrafotografer Sasha Waltz danserforestilling "Na Zemle" (på jorden), er lyden af ristende vand og dæmpet tale imidlertid faststammer. Her hører til gengæld bilernes torden fra adfaldsvejen, der er skudt op bga ved siden af den har så lidelsiske og oftestymede floder ved Kjasme i Rusland.

"Na Zemle" er Sasha Waltzs første produktion, siden hun undersøgte kan-

trakken om at tiltræde som kunstnerisk leder af det legendariske Schaubühne i Berlin sammen med kollegaen Thomas Ostermeier, fra januar 2000. Publikum og kritikere har taget hendes kraftfulde, groteske, ofte næsten akrobatiske stil til sig.

1 "Na Zemle" har Sasha Waltz ladet sig inspirere af Fortidens Russi i Rusland. Selv siger hun om sin Forestilling, at sorgmedigethed og følelsen af fremmedgængeligt er de kodenord, der beskriver den bedst. Forestillingen er blevet til som et tysk-russisk samarbejde mellem Sasha Waltz' eget ensemble og Anatolij Vassiljevs skole i Moskva under ledelse af den kendte instruktør, Gennadij Abramov.

about a world of difference between the peaceful river described by Anton Chekhov in his play "The Cherry Orchard", a favorite recreational area for members of the aristocracy, and the dirty brown and evil smelling river meandering across the stage. The thunderous noise of cars on the highway has replaced the sound of purring water and subdued voices.

The chess of Russia's past is a source of constant fascination and inspiration to Sasha Waltz, the choreographer, who gives forceful, grotesque and almost acrobatic expression to the feelings of softness and alienation.





**BECKETT-SONGS**  
**MÓZGÓ HÁZ, MOVING HOUSE THEATRE, UNGARN**

Ridduhuset, Vester Allé

Søndag 29. og mandag 30. aug. kl. 20.30. 1 t.

Pris kr. 175. Unge under 25 år kr. 115

Døfenes på ungarsk med engelske oversættelser

Arr. Århus Festuge

"Tres spændende og underholdende minutter og stor applaus"

DEE WELT

"Den varmladige ungarske rytmе giver med sin instrumen-

talne fortolkning den  
stærkt sprogfilosofiske tekст  
varme, schwung og liv"

TAGESSPIEGEL

De fleste ville rygte på hovedet. At sætte ungarsk musik til den irske dramatiker og forfatter, Samuel Becketts, stærkt sprogfilosofiske værker er en nærmest absurd tank. Det var ikke desto mindre den opgave, det ungarske teaterkomponist, Moving House Theatre, stillede sig selv i 1990, og fik et meget interessant og tankevækkende resultat ud af.

"Beckett-Songs" blev titlen på koncerten, en eksperimentrende musikteaterperformance, der blander et vildt af velarter, fra humoreske vuggesange over rap og psykedelisk sakrallyd til engelsk verdenmusik, fremført ved hjælp af instrumenter af alle slags, fra akordion til slagøjinstrumenter til metalarer, vaskefad, næsevindkilder, gryder og kirkeklokker. Fjæren mænd og kvinder på scenen

skriger, hvirrer, blæser eller frivler bevægende og kroget de 23 kabaretagtige sangs, Alene, i duet, som en kannen eller i stort kor.

DEE WELT skrev: "Beckett-Songs er som et styrke fyldt chokolade, liggende sedt i maven, farverende skødt og med et stærkt indhold. En nydelse med lang eftersmag".

Komponeriet har taget tekniken fra Becketts "Slabspill" og lagt den ned til små digitale variationer over tematet samme tiden, dadden, tanheden og det absurde. Detta er det 20. århundredes myte, mener László Huel, instruktør og grundlægger af Moving House Theatre. Moving House Theatre blev grundlagt i 1995 i Budapest og har siden vundet stor opmærksomhed blandt både anmeldere og publikum.

What an absurd idea: setting Hungarian music to Samuel Beckett's linguistic philosophical works. At the same, that's exactly what has been done in Beckett-Songs, an experimenting music theatre performance with music ranging from homeless ballades to rap to psychedelic sacred sounds to englisch world music, played on instruments of every kind, from accordion to percussion instruments to rusty washing cans to church bells. Men and women whisper, screech or shriek the words of the 23 cabaret-like songs - alone, in concert and as a choir. Performed with English texts on simultaneous interpretation equipment.



## ONE SECOND HAND

KINETIC THEATRE/SASHA PEPELYAEV, RUSLAND

Ridehuset, Vester Allé

Tirsdag 31. aug. og onsdag 1. sept. kl. 19.30, 1 t. 15 min.

Pris kr. 175. Umge under 25 år kr. 115

Arr. Århus Festuge

Kinetic Theatre - teater i bevægelse. Brudligt talt betyder kinetic energisk, livlig og snævsk, prædikant, der alle på bedste vis beskyler den russiske koreograf Sasha Pepelyaev selv, og hans sammeartede eksperimentarende værker. Idéen om at forbinder postmoderne russisk litteratur med et nutidigt dansesprog og en traditionel russisk dramatik still har siden 1995 været kendtegnende for hans kompagni.

Brudtet med den russiske ballettradition og farsetaget på at lygte et helt nyt og anderledes teaterkoncept op har vært begejstring overalt blandt internationale anmeldere. Pepelyaevs utraditionelle brug af elementer fra folkekunst og gymnastik, kombineret på en fransk og morsom måde med indtrængelse af tekot, klatre etc. bifaldet frem hos London-avisen, The Stage, der skriver: "Hvor mange koreografer er gået over til at integrere tekst i deres dansesverker, har få sammenføjet de to elementer til opfindsomt som den russiske Sasha Pepelyaev..." .

I "One Second Hand" trækker Pepelyaev tematik på aggressonen som mental og fysisk blåstand. Han skildrer menneskets talrige forsøg på at undvige aggressionen ved på scenen at gennemspille samme situation flere gange med forskellige handlingsmønstre. Den verden, Sasha Pepelyaev beskrives, er konflikten mellem kæs og kynisme, men også modstandsrettede falakar. "Pepelyaevs forestillinger er både åndelige, glæderlause og mørke... hans værker er simpelthen superbe", skrev The Daily Telegraph.

I 1998 vandt Sasha Pepelyaev Prix d'Acteur Comunal Général de la Seine-Saint-Denis i Bagnolet for sin forestilling, "The View of Russian Grave from Germany". Det var første gang, en russer vandt denne pris. Senere på året opførte han, som den første russiske nutidige koreograf, sine værker under den anerkendte dansesestival i London, Dance Umbrella.

"One Second Hand" er bestilt af Hamburg Sommertheater Festival, DanseScenen i København og Århus Festuge.

With its Kinetic Theatre - theatre in movement - the Russian choreographer Sasha Pepelyaev combines post-modernist Russian literature with modern dancing and traditional Russian aesthetics to create an original theatre concept. The world he describes is one of aggressiveness, chaos and cynicism, but what makes Pepelyaev's works so superb is that he draws on the whole spectrum of feelings to describe it.





Aarhus Festuge

## SILENCE SILENCE SILENCE THEATRE MILADINSKO, SLOVENIEN

Rødehuset, Vester Allé

Fredag 3. og lørdag 4. sept., kl. 19.30. 1 t. 30 min.

Pris kr. 175. Urdg under 25 år kr. 115

Arr. Århus Festuge



"En ekspressiv forestilling, stærkt præget af neoekspressionistisk dans, rettede sig imod en total kunstoplevelse, series og dyb"

El País

Baldrende rumlyde fylder salen, aflatet af tonerne af dampet Mozart-klavermusik og en taktfast hjertebancket. En vælskint kvinde kledt i gennem stanniol, vridet sig på scenen. Hun stænner erotisk og fylder rummet med sang, på den gang vidunderligt smukt og voldsomt abhængigt. Et gennem spæsægt lyd bryder mørket på scenen og en stor kulan toender frem fra vore øjne. Langsamt bryder en mand ud af skallene, vidste udspændigt sind i et sujt, bladrigt spind. Vi bliver tilskuer til et fascinerende dramabilleder af en urfald, en begyndelse.

Forestillingen "Silence Silence Silence" taler ved hjælp af et mystisk stilbemedt spræg til et ubevist lag i vores psyke,

beboet af slammende arketyper. Den sender os på rejse damed og konferrer os med den smerte, længsel og skuffelse, vi har ankommet hen. Forestillingen, der er skabt af den slovenske teater- og dansinstitutdar, Vito Taufer, er opbygget som en non-verbal dramatisk rejse i en æstetisk, lyrisk og atmosfæreskabende sceneugift. Den eksperimenterer med øjlig Black Theatre og surrealisme efter Kantans og Grotowskis forslifter.

Taufer har, gennem sine femten år som instruktør, opført omkring tredive teaterforestillinger, alle bygget over enben klassiske eller meget moderne tekster. Taufer har modtaget en lang stribe internationale priser og præsen-

seret sine forestillinger ved en lang række internationale festivaler.

Booming sounds from out of space, soft Mozart piano music and a rhythmic heartbeat are the sounds accompanying a woman clad in green tinfoil, a cocoon becoming visible on the stage, and we witness the birth of a man inexplicably enveloped in a glutinous web. A non-verbal dramatic journey takes us to the subconscious layers of our psyche, confronting us with all the pain, longing and disappointment we have stored away.







## LITERATUR WOCHE

### RÅDHUSHALLEN

Mandag 30. og tirsdag 31. aug., onsdag 1. - fredag 3. sept. kl. 20

Pris kr. 60

Oplæsning på originalssprog med dansk oversættelse

Avt. Århus Festuge i samarbejde med Utteraturen på Scenen

I Literatur Woche rettes opmærksomheden mod et bredt udvalg af øst- og centraleuropeiske forfattere. Både kendte og ukendte forfattere fra Tyskland, Rusland, Estland og Øjebliket vil være repræsenteret. Inden for prosa og lyrik.

#### Ljudmila Petrusjevskaia og Kirsten Therap

Mandag 30. aug.

Den russiske forfatterinde Ljudmila Petrusjevskaia og danske Kirsten Therap læser fra og udholde dele af deres fortællingskab og taler om kvinder og litteratur. Ljudmila Petrusjevskaia er på dansk repræsenteret med romanen "Bet er nat" og i novelleantologien "Festen ved den violette fløj". Hun debuterede i dansk sammenhæng med skuespillet "Tre kvinder i det blå" på Det Kongelige Teater. Kirsten Therap har udgivet flere store romancer og er elsket af en stor læseskare i Danmark. "Himmel og Himmel" er nomineret til Arhansmedets danske bog.

#### Günter Grass og Ingo Schulze

Tirsdag 31. aug.

Günter Grass og Ingo Schulze læser op og samtaler med professor Peter Ihrgaard. Ingo Schulzes roman, "Simple storia" - en roman fra den østtyske prævin", udkom herhjemme i maj i år. Romanen er, som "Short Cuts", en mosaik af skæbener, der løb sig krydser hinanden. Romanen er blævet meget rolig og utilslørt til den første ørige "Vende-roman" - den første ørige roman, der følger efter genforeningen, set fra et østeuropæisk perspektiv. Günter Grass får berhjemmet i lebet af efterslæbt udgivet romanerne "Meine Jahrhunder". Bogen indeholder en fortælling for hvert år i det 20. århundrede.

#### Durs Grünbein og Henrik Nordbrandt

Onsdag 1. sept.

De to hæder kronede digtere fra henholdsvis Tyskland og Danmark, Durs Grünbein og Henrik Nordbrandt, vil denne aften læse op fra de digtsamlinger, der har været med til at placere dem som nogle af vor tiels betydeligste digtere. Durs Grünbein regnes, så unge alder til trods, for det ny Tysklands førende lyriker og har modtaget den fineste lyrikpris i Tyskland, Georg Büchner-prisen. "Generalitæ og andre digte", der er udkommet på dansk, er et repræsentativt udtræk af Durs Grünbeins digtsamlinger. Henrik Nordbrandt har udgivet mere end tyve digtsamlinger, og han modtaget stort set alle litterære priser i Tyskland, heriblandt "De Gyldne Laurbær" (1995).

#### Emil Tode og Jaan Kaplinski

Torsdag 2. sept.

Emil Tode og Jaan Kaplinski fra Estland læser op og taler om litteraturens vilkår efter selvstændighedene. Emil Tode er mest kendt for romanen "Grenseland", som han modtog The Baltic Award for i 1994, men også i romanen "Prisen", hvor est. møder vest. Viser Emil Tode sin internationale kvalitet. Jaan Kaplinski udkommer for første gang på dansk omkring Februarigen med romanen "Samme han i os alle".

Snares end at være en typisk repræsentant for den østiske litteratur er Kaplinski en fervidt fugt fra Centraleuropa. Han orienterer sig både og er mere global end national i holdningerne. Jaan Kaplinski er kendt som både debatør, lyriker og essayist, og har desuden været medlem af det østiske parlament.

#### Jächym Topal, Michal Viewegh og Jan Sonnergaard

Fredag 3. sept.

Jächym Topal og Michal Viewegh er fra Tjekkiet, Michal Viewegh udkommer på dansk i august med romanen "Dyrlægeise af unge piger i Tjekkiet". Michal Viewegh er fra både Tjekkiet, mest populære forfatter, og sammenlignes ofte med vores hjemlige Peter Høgh. Jächym Topal er endnu ikke repræsenteret i en samlet udgivelse på dansk, men er blandt andet oversat i antologien "Prags barn". Tyskland og England har fået øjne op for hans indlydende talent, hvor han har modtaget meget fine anmeldelser for romanen "Sæsteren". Jan Sonnergaard præsenterer de to farfattane og læser op af egen produktion.

During "Literatur week", the City Hall will provide a focus for writers from Eastern and Central Europe - renowned as well as unknown writers from Germany, Russia, Estonia and the Czech Republic will let us sample their prose and lyric poetry. The writers will read aloud extracts from their works and discuss them with Danish authors.



## KRAFTWERKE - BERLIN

### UNG KUNST FRA BERLIN

Aarhus Kunstmuseum, Værnedamsvej

Lørdag 28. aug. - søndag 3. okt. kl. 10-17

Efter Festugen mandag lukket

Pris kr. 40. Pensionister over 67 år kr. 30. Unge under 16 år gratis

Arr. Aarhus Kunstmuseum

Med udstillingen Kraftwerke Berlin giver museet en prægning af blæskunsten i Berlin ti år efter murens fald. Efter bruddet med Østtysklands isolering er byen etter en af kunstens metropoler. Berlin er i dag snarere en tilstand end en klart defineret by. Ingen steder i den vestlige verden børsker der en så overvældende byggeaktivitet, og ingen steder fornemmes byens mange historiske lag så påtagende. Hvad sker der med kunsten i en by med ny status, ny økonomi, nye museer, nye bydele, nye mindesmærker, ny selvbevidsthed? Berlin samlyber sig og åbner for nye fortolkninger.

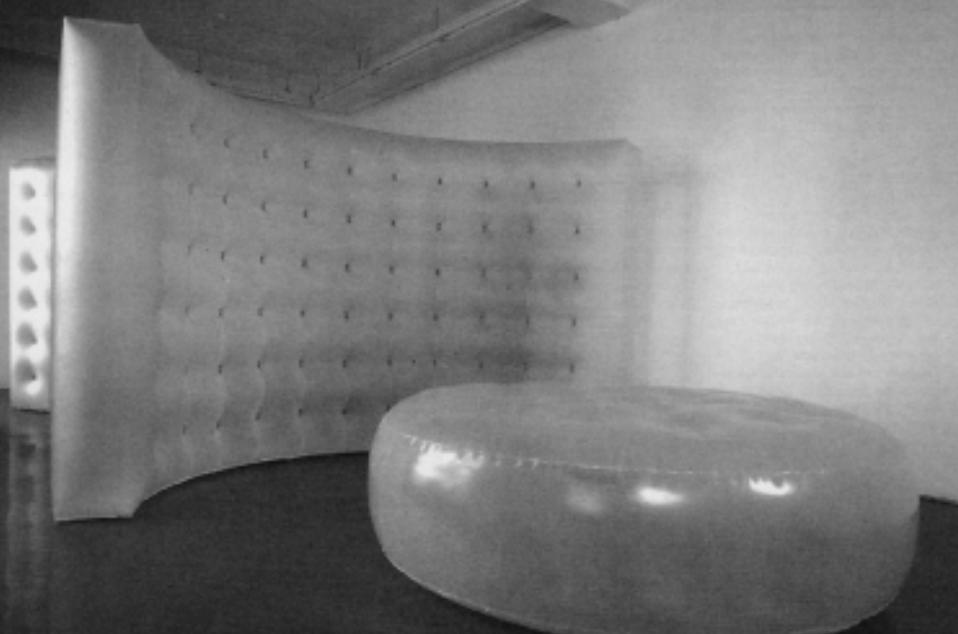
Med Berlin i rollen som et pulsrende, kunstnerisk omdrejningspunkt har Aarhus Kunstmuseum valgt også at inddrage enkelte kuratorer udefra,

hvilket virke ligger i Berlin. Kuratorerne, som er med til at formidle dette kunstneriske kraftverks sociale, politiske og kulturelle liv. Den unge kunst i Berlin handler på mange måder om de emner, man kan lagttage oversigt i verden, men udviklingen mellem billedkunstnere, designer, musikere, modekunstnere, DJ's, arkitekter etc. har dår fået en særlig karakter. Udstillingen består af såvel maleri, skulptur, fotografier, installationer og happenings, og mere end noget andet kan man måske sige, at en slags design knytter en lang række af værkene sammen. Design, som udtryk for en kommunikationsform, et sprug, der i bedste forstand sammenstiller og viderefører spangsmålt til identitet, sociale modeller, historie og fremtid, politik oglivet på

inden af det 20. århundrede. I forbindelse med udstillingen udgives et flersproget katalog.

Ten years after the fall of the Wall, Berlin is back in its old role as an artistic powerhouse. What happens to art in a metropolis that puts on a new status, a new economy, a new identity? Berlin as an open city and open to new interpretations.

With this exhibition, the Art Museum of Aarhus sounds out the state of art in Berlin with paintings, sculpture, photography, installations and happenings by artists who take an active part in shaping the social, political and cultural life of Berlin.





## Univers fra kl. 22

### Koncerttrække

Bispertorvet

Fredag 27. aug. - lørdag 5.

sept. kl. 22-00.30

Arr. Århus Festuge



Når marken har indflydet den hvide himmel af nujlugt, tændes projektorerne på scenen, og Univers forvandler sig til et ungt koncertsted med optræden af danske og est- og central-europæiske pop- og rockbands.

Musikken (Ungum)

med Márta Sébetyén

Lørdag 28. aug.

I februar i år udgav den ungarske gruppe, Musikkas, en lange ventet col- der udfører forholdet mellem en af det 20. århundredes mest indflydelsesrigte komponister, Béla Bartók, og folkenemlig. Musikkas har begejstret et stort publikum over hele verden som den mest talentfulde repræsentant for den ungarske folkenemlig i dag. I

Festugen optræder gruppen bl.a. sammen med sangerinden Márta Sébetyén, der har optrådt på soundtracket til den Oscar-vindende Film, Den engelske patient.

Dessuden betræder 240 Ties Balletten fra Rusland scenen og giver en opvisning i ballet for kvinder i sværvejtsklassen.

Parcival (Rusland)

Søndag 29. aug.

"Anthonia Maranatha" er titlen på Parcivals seneste album, på hvilket hver eneste komposition er lavet som en lille opera. I et episk univers, hvor middelalderlige toner og temer hersker, blander Parcival klassisk højskøn opera, teknologiske rytmener og beats og stive drevesne toner. Hvis man forestiller sig et soundtrack til

Borgens & Dragnos - så er det her i

Parcivals domæne, det findes...

## Sound of Berlin, Tyskland

Evonike, Mina og Schneider TM

TM

Fredag 3. sept.

Under titlen "Sound of Berlin" præsenteres en række af tiols nye bands fra dagens Berlin.



Evonike hører til gruppen af nye berlinske sange, der jonglerer professionelt med postrock-genren. Med i bandet er Helle Marie Rødeber, kendt fra den berømte berlinske gruppe, tåbtf dje. I Evonike spiller han både tus, guitar og synger.



"Kryptonite" er titlen på den berlinske sangerinde, Minas, debutalbum, som hun bødte med i juni i år. Her blander Nina med stor succes den klassiske alternative rockmusik, hun valgde op under i Berlin, med moderne DJ kultur fra hendes egen ungdom.



Musikken på Schneider TM's album er både direkte og indirekte inspireret af grupper som Velvet Underground og Magnum. Det er det mest elektroniske band af de tre, der optræder under titlen "Sound of Berlin", og Schneider TM er så afgjort vildt at stille bekendtskab med.



Nina Hagen  
Lørdag 4. sept.

Legender opstår, og legender der - men samtidig holder famnen fast i den kunstneriske sjæl med en stolt kraft, at legenden lever evigt. Nina Hagen er eksempel på en sådan. Utøver sine legendariske sange, præsenterer hun også et vald af nye numre fra hendes seneste album.

Throughout the week, each late evening features its own special programme under the flowing, floodlit white canopies of Universe. Pop-rock music delivered by DJ's and live bands from Denmark, Germany and Eastern Europe will fill the air and make the Universe sway!

